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EDITORIAL

THE REVIEW IS HAPPY TO PRESENT IN THIS ISSUE THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF the new ninth president of Goshen College, Dr. Paul Mininger, with the title "Culture for Service," this being the motto of the college. It is a major address of unusual significance, interpreting as it does the function of the Christian college in the modern world. Defining culture as modern anthropology uses the term, namely the result in activities and products of man's creative and purposeful transforming of the resources of nature, both material and human, according to his ideals, President Mininger sets forth the Christian's proper relation to this culture. He is not to be rejective of culture, but at once selective, critical and dynamically creative toward it. His controlling motivation is love," the divine impulse of love which is the most creative, most powerful, and most significant cultural dynamic that has ever appeared on the scene of Christian history." And being the disciple of Christ, the Christian must place his culture in the service of Christ. It is in this transcendent and dynamic setting that the service of Goshen College as an educational institution is placed. The latter part of the address deals directly with the spirit and goal of the administration and instruction of Goshen College, setting the tone for the new administration.

It is good that President Mininger has dug deeply into the issue of "Christ and Culture," both because of the seriousness of the issue and because of the naiveté with which Christian educators and teachers often undertake their labors, heedless of their involvement in the culture of the time and of "this world." No real basis exists for a Christian school of higher learning if it is either simply "under" the culture of its world or if its attitude toward culture is determined by some other philosophy or ethos than that of the New Testament. But it is easier to set the problem than to solve it. Others in our Mennonite circles are concerned about the issues and have sincerely worked at them, but this address is, we believe, the first systematic attempt to set forth a Christian philosophy of higher education in the Anabaptist-Mennonite discipleship tradition. It requires further elaboration, criticism, and constructive development, but we hold it to be basically right.

THE ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE MOVEMENT HAD AT THE HEART OF ITS FAITH a great concept of the church as a believing brotherhood committed to full discipleship to Christ. This vision of the church necessarily includes brotherly discipline, the maintenance of a pure church, with spiritual and redemptive handling (punishment) of transgressors. This treatment, called the ban, was set forth already in Conrad Grebel's letter of 1524 to Thomas Müntzer and is an ever-recurring theme in practically all Anabaptist writings of the 16th century, and even more in following times. Nowhere is the ban so frequently and so fully treated as in Menno Simons' writings. President Frank Peters of Tabor College presents in this issue from his Master of Theology thesis at the University of Toronto a thorough discussion of Menno's teaching on the ban, based on an exhaustive combing of his original writings, treating (1) the subjects of the ban, (2) the purpose of the ban, and (3) the administration of the ban. Menno's views are seen to be rational and logical, adapted to the actual situation in which the Anabaptist movement of that day found itself, as it stood under persecution and in danger of aberrations and heresies, without the benefit of state compulsion or ecclesiastical organization and tradition. The extremes of shunning came from other infiuences, although Menno himself, late in life, yielded too much to them.

FRANKLIN LITTELL'S VIGOROUS DISCUSSION OF "SPIRITUALIZERS, ANABAPTISTS, and the Church" treats basically of the same fundamental issue involved in Menno's teaching on the ban, but it points up the issue in its ultimate sense as it faces Protestant Christendom today. It is the issue of a disciplined church with binding commitments to discipleship. Littell, the historian, knows full well his Anabaptists and his "Spiritualizers" of Reformation times, and as the churchman of today he knows his spiritualizers of modern times. As he discusses the divergences of Schwenkfeld and Marpeck as protagonists of the

(Continued on page 53)

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CULTURE FOR SERVICE

PAUL MININGER*

Sixty years ago the Mennonite Church in America was awakened from its sleep of religious formalism and traditionalism by hearing a fresh proclamation of the Gospel and through that message hearing also Christ's personal call to discipleship. Many responded to this new visitation of God's Spirit upon the church and the result was a spiritual awakening and renewal, of which most of us gathered here today are the beneficiaries. The results of this great awakening were primarily two: first, the beginnings of Christian witnessing through evangelism and missions; second, the beginning of a program of Christian education through the establishment of schools and colleges, together with the Sunday school which had come slightly earlier. A vital Christianity will always produce a vigorous program of witnessing to those who are not yet disciples and a program of Christian education for those who have responded to Christ's call to enter the Christian fellowship.

Goshen College was born in the midst of this spiritual awakening. It was brought into existence by men and women who had recently come into an experience of new life through faith in Jesus Christ but who were also the product of the Mennonite Church in America. They felt the impulse to share their experience with all mankind but also felt responsible to interpret the significance of that experience in life and conduct. Goshen College was established

* Inaugural address as the Ninth President of Goshen College, Oct. 17, 1954.

to prepare Christian disciples to become effective witnesses to the Gospel of Christ and to help them make articulate in their lives the significance of Christ for practical living.

Following the custom of other educational institutions, the founders of Goshen College selected a motto in which they tried to express their basic purpose. The words *"Culture for Service"* expressed the ideal of the founders and have had a constant influence upon faculty and students throughout the years. It is a fitting motto for a college but it must be reinterpreted from time to time if it is to function as a guide in determining the educational program and product of Goshen College.

I. *What Is Culture?*

Few words in our English lauguage have a greater variety of meanings and usages than our word "culture." It is frequently used to refer to a refinement of manners achieved by certain individuals or groups in a society which is different from that of the masses of the people. It may also be used to refer to the accumulated wisdom of the past. The cultured person in this sense is the person of wide learning whose ideal is the scholar. Or the word "cultured" may refer primarily to the person who has been trained to manipulate abstract ideas. In this sense the "cultured" person is the intellectual. Frequently, "culture" is used to refer to the fine arts, and that person is cultured who has attained skill in one of the fine arts or who is capable of appreciating the fine arts.

None of these meanings or usages are entirely satisfactory in interpreting our motto "Culture for Service." Modern anthropology has developed a conception of culture which is of special significance for education and which may help us to understand the deeper meaning of our motto. This conception of "Culture" can best be understood when compared with the concept of "nature." Nature is that phenomenon in the universe which is "given" to man as man. It is the world of matter, force, processes, laws, and events that exist independent of man's making or choosing. Although man is himself a part of nature, he nevertheless is more than nature. He has the capacity for thought, reason, imagination, and purpose. He is capable of formulating an image or purpose in his mind and then utilizing the resources of nature in bringing into existence a new product that does not exist in nature. These products resulting from man's manipulation of nature are "culture" or "cultural products." Man's activity in bringing into existence these new products is "cultural activity." For example, man needs protection against the elements

in nature. He begins by forming an idea of a house and then brings together materials from nature—wood, iron, clay, stone—according to a pattern or ideal in his mind. The work of the carpenter or mason is cultural activity. The house is a "cultural product."

The cultural product, however, is not necessarily a material object. It may exist in man's mind rather than in brick or steel and is then conceptual. A poem or song is a cultural product, but it exists only in the mind of its creator and must be recreated in the mind of others before it can truly exist for them. Laws and philosophies are cultural products that exist as concepts rather than as material objects.

Cultural products may be distinguished according to whether they exist as tools for accomplishing some other purpose or whether they are ends to be experienced because of their intrinsic value. An automobile is a cultural product created by man and used as a tool for transporting him from one place to another, in order that he may do other things when he arrives. A symphony is a cultural product which may be enjoyed for its own sake and is not necessarily a means to some other end.

One may distinguish between cultural activities which are engaged in to satisfy the physical needs or animal comforts and those in which man rises above the animal and engages in them by virtue of being a human being as distinct from the animal. Cultivating and harvesting a wheat crop is an important part of man's cultural activity. In a sense, however, it is not a uniquely human activity. Painting a picture, singing a song, nursing a sick child, or reflecting upon one's future destiny—these are cultural activities that are uniquely human.

Culture can be classified into the sciences and the arts. In the sciences man applies his reason to nature and seeks to reproduce nature in his thoughts. He seeks to understand and explain nature in the categories of human reason. He may be motivated merely by the desire to know the truth and to extend the borders of human knowledge, or he may be motivated by the demands of practical life which require the use of his knowledge. The sciences can be classified broadly into the physical or earth sciences, the biographical or living sciences, and the human or social sciences.

In the arts man uses nature as the instrument of his volition and purpose. He gains technical skill in manipulating nature into preconceived forms. The arts may be divided into the applied arts, in which man endeavors to create and enjoy what is useful (agriculture, engineering, etc.); the fine arts, in which man rises above his needs

for survival and experiences the true, the beautiful, and the good (music, painting, etc.); and the liberal arts, which include the intellectual arts, the skills of communication and mathematics.

Cultural phenomena may be organized according to the functions in which man engages in his various relationships. These may be described as personal, social, political, economic, domestic, religious, and aesthetic.

It is obvious from the foregoing analysis that every living person engages in some form of cultural activity and makes or uses cultural products. Man is by nature a creator and a consumer of culture.

II. *Culture for Service*

The motto of Goshen College is "Culture for Service." The imagery used in the word "service" is that of one person, a servant, submitting himself to the authority of another, carrying out the will of another, and ministering to the needs of another. The motto therefore suggests that culture needs an authority outside of itself, to which it submits. It should serve an end or purpose beyond itself. Furthermore, this purpose is to meet the needs of the one whom it serves. In other words, there can be no "culture for culture's sake," but culture is to become the servant of another.

The practical question for culture then is, to what authority is it to submit? What purposes shall culture serve? Whose needs is culture to meet? For Goshen College this question must be answered in the light of the Biblical view of the relationship of the disciple of Christ to human culture.

The Biblical view of man is that he is created by God and that he exists by the will of God his Creator. He is different from all the rest of the creation by virtue of his being created in God's image. This means that the nature of man is not derived from his physical body or his social environment but it is derived from the nature of God his Creator. The Bible also teaches that God has made man lord of creation. God said to Adam, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15).

It seems quite clear that in these words God was commissioning man to use nature with its resources, the nonhuman creation, and exercise control over it under the sovereignty of the Creator. Man was to use nature in such a way that it would witness to the glory

of the Creator. Man was to create a culture that would glorify God. God's original intention was "culture in the service of God."

The tragic sequence to this commission is that man rejected the authority of his Creator and turned his creative powers from the glorification of God to the assertion of his own will and the glorification of self. Since that time man has continued to be a creator of culture but his cultural activity has been marred by his pride and rebellion. Human culture has glorified man the creature rather than God the Creator. The result of man's sin has been alienation from God, a depraved nature, and judgment upon him for his sins. It is the Christian's faith, however, that God has acted to save man. Through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, God reconciled man to Himself, delivered him from the evil powers that controlled his nature, and freed him from impending judgment. By faith union with the crucified and resurrected Christ, the Holy Spirit executes within man a conversion which brings him into fellowship with God and restores within him the moral ideal. God's purpose in Christ was to restore in man the original image of God. Christ died "that man might not henceforth live unto himself but unto him who died for him and rose again." Man, the agent of culture, has become the servant of Christ. He now voluntarily surrenders to God's love in Christ.

Nothing in this experience is in basic conflict with culture as such. The New Testament teaches rather that because God has made Christ the Lord of all the earth, the Christian disciple now has a new dynamic which gives direction to all his cultural activity. It becomes his calling to witness to his Creator and Redeemer and bring all his activities in all areas of his life under the lordship of Christ. Goshen College therefore interprets the motto "Culture for Service" as "Culture in the Service of Christ."

The Christian disciple is not primarily a mystic withdrawing from culture and enjoying his private religious experience. Nor is he an ascetic who denies himself the normal human experiences. And he is not merely a saved soul waiting anxiously to enter heaven. He is rather a man created in the image of God with a commission to glorify his Creator and Redeemer on the stage of human history. He is a sinner who has been set free from his inhibitions and conflicts by Christ, the Lord of Creation, and has heard the words of Paul, "All things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Although the Christian lives in fellowship with God in Christ, it is in the sphere of human culture where his new life becomes articulate. It is through the economic, social, domestic, political, and aesthetic

activities of the disciple's life that he really bears witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is his Redeemer and Lord.

The New Testament teaches clearly that true service to Christ is awakened and stimulated by a consciousness of divine love and is expressed concretely in self-sacrificing love for, and service to, one's neighbor. "Culture for Service" takes on additional meaning when we understand it as "Culture in the Service of Man." The new life resulting from a faith union with Jesus Christ is nothing less than *agape*—"redemptive love seeking and restoring fellowship." It moves man to reach out beyond himself and his egoistical concerns to enter into fellowship with all persons through Christ. Its basic motivation is humble and grateful appreciation for what God has done for man in Christ, and a self-forgetting purpose to remove all barriers that prevent men from having true fellowship. Love facing sinners responds with sharing "in the name of Christ." In the presence of injustices, it responds with forgiveness and restoration. If it meets with violence its response is nonresistance. In a world divided by racial, national, economic, or ecclesiastical barriers it seeks unity and fellowship in Christ. In a world of impersonal relationships dominated by machines and social controls it introduces the reality of the fellowship of men in Christ. Christian service is motivated by "love" and its objective is to minister to human needs so that there may be true fellowship of men in Christ.

This divine impulse of *agape* is the most creative, most powerful, and most significant cultural dynamic that has ever appeared in human history. It is God's gift to sinful man and is the only source of a culture that will truly glorify God or that is worthy of man as a creature of God.

III. *The Conflict in Culture*

We have thus far attempted to define culture and to establish the thesis that culture as such is not in conflict with Christian discipleship but is to come under the Lordship of Christ and be motivated by *agape*. If one accepts this point of view the choice of the Christian disciple is not between culture and "no culture," but between the good and the evil within culture, or between the good and evil uses of culture.

A given society will have within it persons who are serving Christ and persons who are in rebellion against Him. Likewise the culture of that society will have within it both demonic and divine forces, each of which produces cultural activities or cultural products in harmony with its own nature. In every society there

are likewise many cultural activities or cultural products which are a part of the common life of the entire human community, which in themselves are neither good nor evil. They may be brought into the service of Christ or they may be brought into the service of Antichrist. There is no one culture which is to be labeled as Christian and which is then to be perpetuated unchanged until the end of time. It is important therefore that the Christian understand both the real nature of his Christian faith and the character of the culture in which he lives. He must be able to distinguish between what is merely cultural in his experience and that which is super-cultural—the true revelation of God in Christ. Likewise he must be able to distinguish between that in his environment or experience which is "Culture in the Service of Christ" and that which is "Culture in the Service of Antichrist," or that which is potentially of service to either Christ or Antichrist.

Once it is clear to the Christian what the will of Christ is for him in his cultural situation, discipleship requires absolute obedience regardless of consequences. When this ideal of "culture for service" is taken seriously it will result in nonconformity to the prevailing culture at many points. The masses of men in every society are motivated by other culture drives than service to Christ and service to man. In our American society "culture for service" is in conflict with the struggle for power in the political sphere. It is in conflict with the basic acquisitive drive in the economic sphere. It is in conflict with the struggle for autonomy in the arts.

Because of this basic difference between the cultural drive of a "culture in the service of Christ" and "culture in the service of Antichrist" it frequently becomes necessary for disciples of Christ to withdraw from participation in many cultural activities of their community and to organize their life in a different way in order to be obedient to Christ. The true disciple often becomes a threat to the cultural forms of the human community with the result that the masses ridicule and persecute the nonconformist. The true disciple who has dedicated his cultural life to the service of Christ and who understands the true character of the cultural drives of the world will be a martyr before he will disobey his Lord. He will not allow himself to be squeezed into the mold of the culture around him, but his cultural life will be the product of a transformed mind that is seeking to express the will of Christ.

On the other hand there will be many cultural products which the disciple can use, and many cultural activities in which he can participate along with his non-Christian neighbor without com-

promising his witness for Christ. To determine where he must break with his contemporary culture and what cultural practices can be brought under the lordship of Christ is a major concern of the dedicated disciple.

To further complicate the problem, the established cultural practices of the Christian community have often become mere traditions, which may or may not represent the mind of Christ in the contemporary situation. They may be under the judgment of Christ and should be revised if they are adequately to express the mind of Christ.

The problem of determining the mind of Christ is especially difficult in a culture which is rapidly changing and in which men are mobile, as is the case in our mid-twentieth century America. Furthermore, with the modern methods of communication which make it possible for leaders to mold a mass mind, it becomes exceedingly difficult to resist the pressures toward conformity. There is a real danger today that Christian discipleship will degenerate into a sentimental religion that is merely a morale builder for a basically pagan culture. One of the greatest needs of today is for the church to discover a method by which it may ascertain the mind of Christ concerning cultural expressions in a complex and rapidly changing culture.

The Christian brings to his cultural situation a new mind which is the result of a faith union with Jesus Christ. He is devoted to Christ his Lord and is motivated by the divine impulse of *agape*. It is his purpose to witness to the glory of Christ through his cultural activities. He possesses the New Testament through which God gives guidance to those who seek to know the mind of Christ. He has the traditions of the Christian community and the answers which have been given to similar problems in previous generations. In addition to all these resources he has the fellowship of disciples who constitute the living church through which Christ also speaks today. The Spirit of God uses all of these channels to communicate with His disciples if they are seriously seeking His will in the cultural problems of their time.

IV. *Culture for Service at Goshen College*

The problem of the relationship of the Christian to culture comes into clearest focus at the point where the church establishes a school and attempts to give direction to the spiritual life of youth and to determine the cultural pattern of the Christian community of the future. Christian education in its broadest sense is the process

by which the Christian community under a commission from Christ uses all its resources to restore man to the image of God and prepare him for expressing in all his relationships the cultural implications of the lordship of Christ.

Goshen College is dedicated to this great task. In 1949 the faculty adopted the following statement as a guide in the development and evaluation of its total educational program.

> Goshen College seeks to provide educational experiences which will enable students to live harmonious, purposeful, and socially responsible lives in the spirit of Christ. The guiding principle in determining the values which the faculty considers most worth striving for in personal and group living is the concept that the essence of Christianity, as set forth in the Scriptures, is discipleship, the transforming of the whole life after Christ. This Christian discipleship is to be expressed in human relations, in the use of time, energy, material resources, and in devotion to the church and its mission. The spirit of brotherhood is to be practiced in all personal and group relationships. Life is to be lived with friend or foe according to the ethic of the love of Christ who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.
>
> Life thus committed to the way of Christ cannot be segmented into secular and nonsecular compartments. The whole of life is lived in the context of commitment to the will of God; and therefore, every activity, whether work, recreation, social fellowship, prayer, or meditation, has spiritual significance. The highest expression of faith in Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life, will be found in loving, sacrificial service to one's fellow men. A belief in the inseparability of faith and life means that in Christian education, living and learning, and content and method, cannot be separated. The entire program of Goshen College is planned to help students to know Christ as Saviour and Lord and to become effective witnesses for Him to a sensate world replete with economic greed, hate, and warfare.

It is fitting on this occasion to outline more specifically some of the implications of this interpretation of our motto for the program of education at Goshen College today.

1. The Mennonite Board of Education, the faculty and staff of Goshen College, must understand the relationship of Christ to culture and rededicate themselves to glorifying Jesus Christ in and through culture. They must utilize the resources of human culture to achieve Christ's purposes for man in time and in eternity.

2. Goshen College must begin its work with students by seeking to relate each one to Him who is supernatural and supercultural—the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ whom God has made Lord of all. Christian education is the education of a Christian disciple. It must make disciples before it can teach them. Evangelism must precede education. The college must

establish and strengthen the disciple's dedication to Christ before it can effectively relate him to the world of culture.

3. Goshen College believes that within human culture there is to be found a reality which is super-cultural. This super-cultural and supernatural phenomenon is the Bible. Although it uses the forms of culture we believe that God has inspired those forms, and He has revealed Himself through this medium, the Bible, which is in very truth the Word of God to man. It is an important part of the educational task of Goshen College therefore to bring students into touch with the Bible, the Word of God, in order that through it God may reveal Himself to them. It is only as our students come to know God in Christ—the super-cultural—and dedicate themselves in obedience to His will and purposes that they are prepared to use human culture in the service of God in Christ.

4. Goshen College as a college is dedicated to the transmission of human culture—the arts and the sciences. Its resources in the library, and its reservoir of culture in the experience and training of its faculty, are concentrated on this campus to be transmitted to the eager minds of growing youth. The major task of a college, after making disciples under the lordship of Christ, is to teach, to communicate, to transmit the cultural heritage to the younger generation. Sincere piety is no substitute for effective teaching. Physical facilities are essential but are no guarantee of effective teaching. We must therefore keep our attention focused upon our major goals and not be confused because we are doing some other important things well.

5. But Goshen College, obviously, cannot transmit to students the whole of human culture. It is and must be selective in its use of culture. Its purpose is not only to transmit culture but to use culture as the medium for forming disciples whose inner life is integrated around their dedication to Christ and who witness to this Christ in all their relationships. Teachers must select their subject matter with reference to its contribution, directly or indirectly, to the forming of mature and effective disciples of Christ.

6. Goshen College should contribute to the *creation* of culture. We have brought together in this college faculty a talented, trained, and dedicated group. Under the impulse of our ideal, "Culture in the Service of Christ," some will be not only capable of transmitting culture but able also to make a contribution to the creation of culture. They should do this by extending the range of man's knowledge through research, by engaging in the arts, by interpreting anew the relation of Christ to culture. Furthermore, there are among

our students those gifted persons whom God gives to the world who are creative personalities and whose gifts should be exploited and developed for "Culture in the Service of Christ."

7. Goshen College also has a prophetic mission if it is to be true to its motto of "Culture for Service." Not only must every instructor be a thoroughly trained scholar in his particular field; as a dedicated disciple he must also bring the mind of Christ to bear upon that phase of culture for which he is responsible. He is a prophet in the sense of bringing culture under the judgment of Christ and leading students to see its relation to Christ. The prophet-scholar must lead his students not only to understand modern culture but to make judgments concerning it. Students must be helped to discern between that in modern culture which is "in the service of Christ" and that which is in the service of Antichrist, and must then be led to decision or commitment to Christ and against Antichrist. They must also be led to recognize that which is neutral but can be used by either demonic or divine powers.

8. Goshen College must prepare students to use human culture as a gift from God and receive it with thanksgiving. One of the tragedies of modern culture is that much of it has become isolated from God and even many Christians participate in it without reference to God. Christian discipleship requires that all of culture be seen in its relation to God in Christ. The result of this insight is thanksgiving. We see culture as a continuation of God's creative activity, accept it as a gift of God, and use it with gratitude and with a sense of stewardship.

9. Goshen College in its transmissive, creative, and prophetic functions should also exploit human culture for the expression, communication, and extension of the Gospel of Christ. The Christian faith is expressed and communicated through cultural media, and these should be brought into the direct as well as indirect service of Christ. This will mean that the communication arts should have an important place in the curriculum. There should also be a greater emphasis upon the fine arts as a medium of communicating and expressing the Christian Gospel.

10. The greatest advances in culture in recent years have been in the extension of man's knowledge and mastery in the field of the natural sciences. Goshen College has been strong in this division and should continue its rich offerings and thorough instruction. However, the motto "Culture in the Service of Christ and Man" would suggest that Goshen College should expand its offerings in the social sciences and thus make possible a more thorough under-

standing of man in his human relationships, and provide those skills which will make it possible for the intelligent Christian disciple to put man's knowledge about man into the service of Christ. Course offerings must be strengthened or expanded in such areas as psychology, anthropology, education, and social service.

11. Goshen College is also a preserver of culture. In a period of rapid social change, the Christian college must be truly conservative. Many of the values which are to be found in this institution and its culture are of permanent worth and must be preserved. This does not mean that all change is considered evil or that the traditional is good because it is old. Goshen College should "prove all things," explore the new, but "hold fast that which is good."

12. Since Goshen College is preparing students to live in the midst of a culture which is in conflict with the ideal of "Culture for Service," it must expose students to this culture, help them to understand it, teach them to discriminate between the evil and the good in it. It should prepare them for a life in conflict with this anti-Christian culture and in nonconformity to it. It should prepare them for witnessing to this anti-Christian culture by word and action even if this means persecution and martyrdom.

13. Finally, Goshen College must carry on its total program in the context of the Christian Church. We are the servant of the church and we must keep our place as servants and not assume the place of masters. On the other hand, we are in fact a part of the church, and therefore have the right as well as the responsibility to share in the total life and thought of the church.

It is more important, however, that we remember that we are a part of the church in the sense that we—students, faculty, and staff—are a fellowship of disciples learning from Christ and united to one another by virtue of our union with Christ. It is of primary importance that the total educational program be carried on in an environment of love and fellowship in Christ which is of the essence of the church. Christian love and fellowship must exist among board members, faculty, and staff, or there can be no Christian education. Changes may be taking place in students and learning of a kind will go on, but only in an environment where there is genuine Christian fellowship among the responsible people in the educational program can the Spirit of God operate to achieve His will in the educational process. Furthermore, as teachers and staff we must be motivated by Christian love for our students as we guide their learning experience. We dare not minimize intellectual discipline and professional skill, but we must combine them with

Christian love for our students and Christian fellowship among ourselves.

As students live among us they will be confronted by Christ through our witness for Him. As they dedicate themselves to Christ and His purposes, they will enter more vitally into the Christian fellowship. In this environment they will be motivated to purposeful and diligent learning. They will then be prepared to enter into the cultural heritage which is theirs and which we are prepared to give them. Going from us they will enter into the life of our time, dedicated to using "Culture in the Service of Christ." They will make this ideal explicit through Christian action which uses "Culture in the Service of Man." They will be obedient to Christ regardless of the consequences. This will result in separation from the culture of Antichrist and nonconformity to its spirit and pattern. Then and then only will Goshen College achieve the goal of its motto "Culture for Service."

THE BAN IN THE WRITINGS OF MENNO SIMONS

FRANK C. PETERS*

Menno Simons' position on the ban is a subject of much controversy in the history of the Mennonites. At the core of the theology of the Anabaptists is their concept of the "pure" church. This brings with it the task of maintaining a "pure" church, which actually involves two measures: the principle of baptizing adult believers and the administering of discipline in the church. By investigating the stand taken by the early Anabaptist fathers, we may gain some light on present-day problems involving the use of church discipline.

Menno Simons did not write in a systematic way.[1] His writings tend to be repetitious, and he never intended them to be read as one volume. He wrote as various subjects were presented or needed clarification among the churches.[2] The task of the modern scholar is to bring order to the scattered references throughout Menno's works. It should also be noted that Menno's purpose in writing was not so much to give a systematic and objective dissertation of a given truth, but rather to help his followers understand the practical implications of Scriptural injunctions. Thus van der Zijpp says:

> Menno's significance is further limited by the fact that he did not leave a systematic theological structure as the other reformers did. His ideal was the apostolic church, and in his writings, especially in the earliest ones, he endeavored to strengthen his followers on the already established foundation of faith. His writings are therefore chiefly of a devotional character. For this reason Menno must be considered a shepherd of souls rather than as a dogmatician; hence his words were a source of strength for the individual believer rather than the source of a theological construction which dominated the thought of the entire movement.[3]

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[1] Erland Waltner, in his article *The Anabaptist Conception of the Church,* generalizes at this point and says: "Moreover, as Anabaptist doctrine was forged in the heat of controversy and amidst the fires of persecution we can hardly expect to find it offering systematic and precise theological formulas on ecclesiology or on any other subject. They were more concerned about the practical application rather than the theoretical explanation of the Bible. Furthermore, in the infancy of a religious movement, doctrine is not crystallized and emphasis may vary from decade to decade, or even from year to year." *MQR* XXV (January, 1951) 6.

[2] Anna Brons, *Ursprung, Entwickelung und Schicksale der Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten.* (Norden, 1884) 92 f. "Da alle die Notwendigkeit des Bannes zur Reinhaltung der Gemeinden erkannt hatten, aber sich über die Art der Ausübung und Anwendung desselben nicht klar waren, so baten sie Menno, seine Meinung kund werden zu lassen, was diesem zu einigen Sendschreiben über diesen Punkt Veranlassung gab."

[3] N. van der Zijpp, "The Significance of Menno Simons for Our Brotherhood," *MQR* XXVII (January, 1937) 16.

The Ban as Commanded in the Scriptures

Since the Scriptures were held in highest regard by Menno, he uses them as his basis for developing his teaching on the ban.[4] The words of Christ in Matt. 18:15-17 are constantly referred to:

> Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

According to this passage discipline in the church has three stages, of which the ban, or excommunication from fellowship, is the final stage.

This passage from Matthew is belabored at length in Menno's *Scriptural Explanation of Excommunication.* In this argumentative article Menno defends the practice of "avoiding" or shunning those that have been banned from the church because of their unscriptural walk. He begins the treatise with these words:

> Dear brethren, since I find that, for some time, much strife has been occasioned in regard to the ban, and this so violently and indiscreetly, therefore, I fear brotherly love, Christian peace and unity, with some, are more diminished than augmented . . . ; that they entertain the opinion in this matter, that not the banned ones themselves should be shunned, but only their false doctrine and offensive life, not observing that they have already become entangled in false doctrine; for thereby they nullify the plain ordinance of Christ, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." . . .[5]

With this introduction Menno goes into a play on words which must have been occasioned by the opposition. The matter at stake is the correct application of the term "Gentile" or "heathen." How should one treat a "heathen"? Menno says that this does not apply to the present time, that is, to the way a "Gentile" is treated today.[6] The proper inference from this word of Christ demands that we investigate the relationship between Jew and Gentile as it existed in the days of Christ.

There were those who taught that one should commune with a "Gentile" in the way in which Israel associated with the surround-

[4] Brons, *op. cit.,* 103. "Das Evangelium und die Briefe der Apostel gaben ihm die Richtschnur für den Glauben sowohl als für das Familienleben und für die Gemeindeordnung."

[5] *Complete Works of Menno Simons,* II (Elkhart, 1871) 123. This volume will be referred to thus: *Works,* II, 123.

[6] *Works,* II, 126.

ing tribes in the days of the Old Testament. Menno acknowledges that "Moses, in his law, allowed a great deal of liberty to the outward Israel; to have intercourse with the Gentile nations, as buying, trading, and usury."[7] But, he argues, if the relationship suggested in Matthew 18 is similar to what existed in the days of the Old Testament, then it follows that the punishment imposed upon the violation of that prerogative would also stand. He refers the reader to the passage in Deuteronomy 17,[8] where a similar pattern of disciplinary procedure is commanded for Israel. However, the final judgment is not avoidance but death.[9]

Menno assumes that some might understand Matthew 18 to mean that the impenitent brother should be treated as the Gentiles of Menno's day are. The application cannot be taken from the contemporary scene because it was spoken in the Jewish setting and loses its significance if taken out of that context.[10] The Jew-Gentile relationship does not exist at the present time.

It follows, then, that Christ meant that His followers should maintain a standard of in-group discipline in which the impenitent should be treated as the Jews treated the Gentiles and the publicans at the time of Christ.[11] Menno concludes:

> Behold, dearly beloved brethren, however we turn these words of Christ, they cannot be made to apply to any other time than that of Christ; namely, that as the Jews at that time dealt with a heathen and publican—so we may also now treat an apostate who, either through false doctrine, or through an unclean, shameful life, dishonors, rejects and disgraces Christ Jesus and His holy Word.[12]

Menno refers to the actions of Christ who ate with "publicans and sinners." Menno clarifies this attitude of Christ by asking: "What kind of sinners were they, with whom Christ ate?" They were such as came to hear Him and were desirous to be forgiven by Him. He ate with Samaritans, for they received His word and believed on Him. The church is always ready to receive the repentant one.[13]

The Scriptural basis for the ban and shunning is strengthened by the words of Paul. Menno refers to I Corinthians 5, where Paul is shown to have been in hearty agreement with the words of Christ. "Yea, he who closely considers this matter will find that Paul, in his doctrine of separation, has, in every way, conformed to this rule of Christ."[14] Menno finds that Paul in this chapter has enjoined the church six times to practice the ban:[15]

[7] *Works*, II, 125.
[8] Verses 2-7.
[9] *Works*, II, 125.
[10] *Works*, II, 126.
[11] *Works*, II, 127.
[12] *Works*, II, 131.
[13] *Works*, II, 130-31.
[14] *Works*, II, 131.
[15] *Works*, II, 136.

(1) "Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." (v. 2.)
(2) "To deliver such an one unto Satan." (v. 5.)
(3) "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump." (v. 7.)
(4) "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators." (v. 9.)
(5) "With such an one, no not to eat." (v. 11.)
(6) "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (v. 13.)

From this chapter Menno makes three basic deductions. First, the apostle had a great love for the church and this chapter on the ban was the fruit of love. Menno writes that Paul "was paternally solicitous for them, and ever taught, admonished and advised them to their own good." Furthermore, Paul establishes the fact that discipline shall be practiced "in the name, that is, by virtue of the command and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ." Finally, a brother who does not repent after admonition should be delivered unto Satan. The latter is "the voice of man, through the church," telling the unrepenting brother that "he is deprived of the communion of Christ and his church. . . ."[16]

Menno summarizes his exegesis of the words of Paul as follows:[17] (1) The Apostle Paul and Christ agree on the ban and on shunning. (2) Paul's injunction "not to keep company" with an apostate brother "implies daily communion, company, walk, intercourse, . . . conversation and dealing." (3) It does not imply "accidental conversation, or necessary dealings, such as dividing a legacy, liquidating debts, . . . or to be serviceable in time of need." (4) The apostate brother is not to be treated as an enemy but is to "be admonished as a brother." II Thess. 3:15.

Who is to be Banned and Shunned?

In the *Explanation of the True Apostolic Separation or Excommunication* Menno discusses the topic, "Over whom this Apostolic Excommunication is to be used." He uses the ban of Israel as an example or type. "In the political dominion of Israel, no leper, none that had an issue, nor those who were defiled by the dead, were suffered to come into the camp as long as they were not healed and purified according to the law."[18] Even so the church must cleanse itself of those who are spiritually defiled.[19] Menno proceeds to characterize those with whom the church must deal in a disciplinary way:

[16] *Works,* II, 131.
[17] *Works,* II, 135.
[18] *Works,* I, 246.
[19] *Loc. cit.*

From which, according to the doctrine of the holy apostles, it is evident that the obstinate disturber or sectary who causes, contrary to the doctrine of godliness, offense and discord, and those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ, who lead an offensive life, or the overcurious [German translation, Neugierige], inquisitive [German, Vorwitzige], and lazy, who live at the expense of others, shall not be suffered in the holy house, camp, city, temple, church and body of Christ, which is the church; but that we, with one accord, should exclude and shun them, according to the Scripture. . . .[20]

Menno describes three classes of people who must be expelled from the circle of the believers: (1) those who live in "open sin," (2) those who cause divisions, and (3) those who teach a false doctrine.

Without doubt the first group received major attention in the writings of Menno. One can readily sense the difficulty which the Brethren faced when they began to define "open sin." They found themselves in harmony and agreement as far as the main principle was concerned, but were easily disunited when attempting to apply this principle to individual cases.[21] One thing is clear from the writings of Menno: he advocated the use of the ban where members of the church *publicly* violated the standards of the Scriptures as interpreted by the Brethren. Sins committed in private, where the public was uninformed, were to be settled between God and the repentant brother. Thus Menno wrote:

However, should it ever happen that any one should sin against God in private. . . , and should the spirit of grace, which works repentance, again operate upon his heart, and cause genuine repentance, of this we have not to judge [as a church] ; for it is a matter between him and God. For since it is evident that we do not seek our righteousness and salvation, the remission of our sins, satisfaction, . . . through excommunication . . . . There are but two objects and ends why the ban is commanded in the Scriptures, which can have no reference to such an one. Because . . . his sins are private; hence no offense can follow. And secondly, because he is in deep contrition and is penitent in life. Therefore, he has no need then of being brought to repentance. Nor are we anywhere commanded of Christ to put him to open shame before the church.[22]

Furthermore, Menno admonishes the church that the ban is not to be used on every "open" sin. He distinguishes between "falling" into sin and remaining in error. The one who "falls" into sin is to be admonished "as often as the Lord gives spirit and grace, till they again conform, in all things to the truth, depart from their

[20] *Loc. cit.*

[21] Brons, *op. cit.*, 97. "Dabei waren sie sich aber wohl bewusst, dass die Grenzen nicht bestimmt festgestellt werden könnten, dass es vielmehr genüge die Grund-Principien festzustellen, die Anwendung derselben im einzelnen Fall aber jedesmal der Beurteilung des Gewissens zu überlassen sei . . . ."

[22] *Works,* I, 254.

errors, and enter upon the right way. . . ."[23] He uses the case of Peter's denial[24] as an example of sin that would not be classified as "willful" and deserving of the ban. The church must discriminate between "backsliding and remaining in that condition."[25] For dealing with the backslider he has these instructions:

> It is, therefore, just and right that we be truly circumspect; that we do not depress too much a poor, brokenhearted sinner, who would willingly be restored and rescued from his deplorable condition; but we must, in Christian meekness, tender him the hand of charity, lift him up, and help him to bear his burden as much as we can, and as far as our consciences and the Word of God permit.[26]

This fall of Peter would be similar to the condition referred to by the Apostle Paul in Gal. 6: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

It remains the task of the church to determine whether a specific sin is the result of an "unexpectedly precipitate error"[27] or whether the accused intentionally "willed" to sin. Thus Menno instructs the church:

> Since then, it is manifest, that to fall, and to remain in that condition, and presumptuously to sin, are different; therefore, will I leave such sins . . . [to the] love of the church, to look into with wisdom and understanding. If they deem it deserving excommunication, let them judge as the Scriptures teach. If they consider it not in that light, but only as a sin, unwarily committed, that they then restore the sinner or transgressor, with a spirit of meekness and love.[28]

The second group of offenders were those who caused divisions in the church and who were to be excommunicated. These people Menno characterizes as "the obstinate disturber or sectary" who, "contrary to the doctrine of godliness," causes "offense and discord."[29] In replying to Gellius Faber, who accused the Anabaptists of the error that their ban was destructive rather than constructive and claimed that the Anabaptists could not find five out of a hundred of the banned who had been "brought to order and saved by their banning ,"[30] Menno writes this in defense: "We thereby rid the community of false doctrine, discord, and offensiveness."[31]

The false prophets or those who disseminated false teachings represent the third group. Here it was the Münster group that received major attention. In the same writing to Gellius Faber, Menno says: "Fourthly, that we thereby [by the ban] testify that

[23] *Works,* I, 259.
[24] Luke 22:54-62.
[25] *Works,* I, 258.
[26] *Loc. cit.*
[27] *Works,* I, 258.
[28] *Works,* I, 258.
[29] *Works,* I, 246.
[30] *Works,* II, 73.
[31] *Works,* II, 73.

we do not consent to, nor unite with the Münsterites, and other rebellious sects."[32] Furthermore Menno writes that if the peaceful Anabaptists had not used the ban on those that taught falsely, they would have surely been accused of being "rebels and Arians."[33] Menno's stand against false teachers is well set forth in his *Treatise on, and Scriptural Explanation of, Excommunication,* where he says:

> Therefore the Holy Spirit has abundantly taught us to separate such from among us; not to hear the words of the false prophets, for they deceive us; to separate from such who, contrary to apostolic doctrine, cause offense and contention; to shun those who are not pleased with the salutary words and doctrine of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, but are contentious and desirous of quarreling, etc.; to guard against dogs and artful laborers and the selfish; to flee the voice of strangers; to shun an heretic or a master of sects, after having been once or twice admonished; not to greet nor receive in our houses him who does not teach the doctrine of Christ; and to withdraw from every brother who acts disorderly and walks not according to the apostolic doctrine. O, says Paul, that they be cut off who disturb you. Lev. 13:2; Jer. 23:16; Titus 3:10; II John 10; II Thess. 3:6.[34]

Not only was Menno plagued by the Münsterites, of whom he says, "The sect of Münster made inroads, by whom many pious hearts in our quarter were led into error,"[35] but the Davidists also caused him great concern. This group followed David Joris (*ca.* 1501-56), who had joined the Anabaptists in the Netherlands. He was baptized by Obbe Philips and later made a bishop. It was not long before he made claims to special visions which proclaimed him as the "third David" destined to establish a future kingdom. This caused Menno to write: "Nor am I a third David, as some have falsely passed themselves and yet pass themselves for."[36] To Gellius Faber Menno writes: "Nor can we prevent that some become Davidists . . . in spite of all our faithful admonitions. . . ."[37] It was this type of obnoxious mysticism[38] and chiliasm that led Menno to advocate the ban as a measure of self-protection for the church.

Menno strongly advocated that this ban be carried out without respect to persons. It was probably this aspect of the ban which caused most confusion and discord in the church. His arguments were based on the primacy of the faith relationship, and he made all other relationships subservient to it. According to Menno, parents were expected to give assent to the excommunication of their

[32] *Works,* II, 74.
[33] *Loc. cit.*
[34] *Works,* II, 133.
[35] *Works,* I, 4.
[36] *Works,* II, 248.
[37] *Works,* II, 73.

[38] For a comprehensive summary of Joris' teaching see Roland Bainton, *The Travail of Religious Liberty* (Philadelphia, 1951) Chap. V.

children, and one member of the marriage partnership should agree to the excommunication of the other partner if the church saw fit to take this action. "The rule of the ban is a general rule, and excepts no one; neither husband nor wife, nor parent nor child."[39] Menno believed that the ban should not allow a respect for persons; thus he advanced six reasons to support his convictions:

(1) The heavenly espousal supersedes the earthly union. A man shall not, for the sake of family ties, be disobedient to the Word. (2) Since excommunication is for the purpose of avoiding contamination, it should be practiced even more in the case of relatives because a natural degree of closeness already exists. "I scarcely know how they will escape the snares of death, if they do not especially observe the holy Word and counsel of the Lord in this respect." (3) The ban was given to lead the straying one to repentance. If one wishes that relatives be brought to repentance, one will also agree to God's way of accomplishing this by using the ban. (4) Menno advises that there is only *one* excommunication taught in the Scriptures, and this ban does not refer to spiritual communion only but also to natural communion. (5) if the parents or the marriage partner of an apostate are spiritual, they will be in hearty agreement with the church and support the actions of the church. (6) Menno argues from experiential evidence and refers to some 300 cases where this rule has not been adhered to and where evil effects have resulted. What Menno probably means is that the innocent party has been led into error by not observing the practice of avoidance.[40]

Even preachers[41] and those in high places of office should be disciplined if their lives and teachings were not in accordance with the Word. In answering Gellius Faber on matters pertaining to the ban, Menno writes: "For where do we find, alas, more ungodliness than among those in authority?" Gellius Faber insisted that the magistrates should handle all matters of discipline, even in the church, "as if they were the true and faithful members of the church of Christ," whereas Menno, on the other hand, points out that Faber "never observes that if the pastors would rightly judge, according to the holy Word, the magistrates, next to the preachers themselves, would be the first who should be, according to the Scriptures, separated and excluded from the communion of the pious."[42]

[39] *Works,* II, 276 f.
[40] *Works,* I, 248 f.
[41] An example would be Adam Pastor, a bishop, who was banned by Dirk Philips because of his erroneous views. C. Krahn, *Menno Simons* (Karlsruhe, 1936) 69.
[42] *Works,* II, 71.

Menno summarizes the matter of banning without respect to persons thus: "All those who enter into the obedience of the Word, and afterwards live or teach contrary to it, cannot be permitted to continue with us as brethren and sisters, if they hear not our admonitions." Then he goes on to say: "In this case, neither greatness nor littleness, riches nor poverty avail. With God there is no respect of persons; they must all bow to the Spirit, word and scepter of Jesus, or else they cannot remain our brethren."[43]

Why Should the Ban be Employed?

Menno develops two main reasons for the use of the ban in the church. In the first place, the ban is a means of protecting and purifying the church. No church can exist without the proper use of the ban, even as a city cannot function without police, regulations, and laws.[44] The ban is a protective device which helps ward off evil influences. Menno writes that the first reason for the ban is that "the church of the Lord will be maintained unprofaned, in salutary, pure doctrine, and in an inoffensive [blameless] life."[45] He refers to Israel who kept herself "pure" as long as she administered the ban; but when "they neglected it, inclined their ears to falsehood, and gave way to false prophets, they deviated from the way of life and degenerated into all kinds of wickedness and idolatry."[46] Another example is the "primitive church," which remained the church of Christ as long as discipline was practiced. As soon as "they laid aside the rod" they established an "anti-Christian church."[47] Thus Menno concludes that "a church without a ban or separation is like a vineyard without an enclosure and trenches, or a city without walls; for the enemies have free ingress into it to sow and plant their pernicious tares unhindered."[48] To Gellius Faber's charge that the ban as used by the Anabaptists is destructive, not constructive, Menno replies with these words: "Firstly, that we thereby obey God's Word. Secondly, that we thereby rid the community of false doctrine, discord, and offensiveness."[49]

In the true church membership is on a voluntary[50] basis, and each member has personally subscribed to the "way of Christ" at

[43] *Works,* II, 73.
[44] *Works,* I, 241.
[45] *Works,* II, 69.
[46] *Loc. cit.*
[47] *Works,* II, 69.
[48] *Loc. cit.*
[49] *Works,* II, 73.
[50] Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (Philadelphia, 1952), 78. "The church covenant was undertaken at baptism and was thought to be the highest expression of religious voluntarism short of martyrdom. . . ."

baptism.[51] As the body of Christ, the church must expel those who are not faithful to their vow, as the body expels an impure element by way of an abscess.[52]

The first reason for the use of the ban is self-protection. Because "we are soon polluted with the pernicious, abominable life of the wicked,"[53] the Holy Spirit has approved this means of cleansing "in order that they move us not, through fair words. . . ."[54] Menno is also concerned about protecting the reputation of the church. He writes: "For their false doctrine eats as a canker, II Tim. 2:17; nor that the abominable with their impure, carnal life pervert us, nor give us a bad name among those[that are] without."[55] In maintaining a good witness, the church will teach the world that the "advice, doctrine, ordinance and command of God should be maintained and obeyed." Such a witness of purity will prove an admonition to all preachers and their churches.[56]

The ban is also a necessity in protecting the doctrine of the church both from corruption within the church and from the infiltration of false teaching from without. As has been mentioned, Menno refers mainly to the Münsterites and Davidists when discussing false teaching. Menno clearly discusses this point in his answer to Faber: "That we thereby testify that we do not consent to, nor unite with the Münsterites, and other rebellious sects."[57]

Whereas the first reason concerned itself with the purity of the church, the second deals with the salvation of the individual apostate. The ban is a means whereby the erring one is brought to repentance. Thus Menno concludes that "all those who again forsake the holy Word and true way and go astray in the world" will by excommunication "be deterred . . . and brought to repentance, seek union and peace, and thus be set free before the Lord and His church, . . . or from their ungodly life."[58] In Menno's *Reply to Gellius Faber* he re-emphasizes this thought when he says: "That the wicked, by a reasonable admonition and separation from the pious, may, at heart, become ashamed, humble themselves and sincerely repent before God and the church."[59] Menno falls back on two

[51] Littell says: "The idea of a covenantal relationship to God and one's fellows became the foundation of the Anabaptist community, and through it came use of the ban. The Anabaptists said repeatedly that true baptism was that submission to the Divine described in I Peter 3:13-22, the responsibility of a good conscience toward God. They saw this couldn't be easily done, but required brotherly admonition and exhortation, the practice of intentional fellowship. By baptism the believer came under the discipline of a Biblical people, and if the door of entrance was closely watched a strong and true church could be maintained." 77, 78.

[52] *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, III, 116.
[53] *Works*, I, 246.
[54] *Works*, I, 247.
[55] *Loc. cit.*
[56] *Works*, II, 74.
[57] *Works*, II, 73 f.
[58] *Works*, I, 247.
[59] *Works*, II, 69.

Biblical examples and refers to Paul's dealings with the Corinthian brother whom he delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."[60] The other example is in I Tim. 1:20, where a similar procedure was followed with Hymenaeus and Alexander, that they might no longer blaspheme. In both cases the object of discipline was the restoration of the erring one.

In developing these two reasons[61] for the use of the ban in the church, Menno concludes the subject by establishing love as the primary motive in discipline. The faithful are to consider "whether this reason is not a special work of the love of Christ, which is of great usefulness, service, power and fruit to all the pious."[62]

The Administration of the Ban by the Church

In his earlier ministry Menno taught that excommunication should always be preceded by three admonitions as set forth in Matt. 18. However, when Zylis and Lemke point to Menno's lack of consistency in this matter, Menno admits that a change has taken place in his thinking. "Eighteen or nineteen years ago, when I wrote the first book, I was not well enough enlightened to understand all things thoroughly, and I freely and frankly admit, that until that time I included all sin in three admonitions."[63] He justifies the change in method by pointing to certain "abominations which were, from time to time, discovered in the church" and "the miserable disputation and discord which crept in." This moved him to serious reflection, which in turn finally forced him to advocate a stricter procedure in the administration of the ban by the congregation.

Menno did retain admonition.[64] He says, "If anyone should err or sin against his brother through negligence, infirmity, inconsiderateness, inexperience, or ignorance, . . . he, the one against whom the transgression was done, should therefore . . . out of true love admonish and reprove him, lest his brother fall into greater

[60] *Works,* II, 69.

[61] Menno cites the following Scripture passages in support of the ban; for false doctrine, Matt. 7:16; Rom. 16; II Tim. 2; I Tim. 6; Titus 3; Phil. 3; II John 1; for sinful carnal life, Matt. 18; I Cor. 5; II Thess. 3; II Tim. 3. (*Works,* II, 446.)

[62] *Works,* I, 247.

[63] *Works,* II, 286.

[64] In a letter Menno answers a delegation of five brethren from Friesland who requested that the ban be employed only after three futile admonitions had been given. Here Krahn says: "Mit dieser Forderung stimmt Menno überein, nur dass 'Criminele zaken' auch ohne Ermahnung mit dem Ausschluss zu bestrafen sind." *Op. cit.,* 89. The strict banners demanded immediate excommunication without admonition. To this Menno could not agree. As Krahn says, Menno always took a middle-of-the-road position in debatable issues.

errors and perish."[65] Admonition becomes the duty of *every* brother in the church. Menno put the charge of admonition thus:

> If you see your brother sin, then pass not by him, as one that does not prize his soul; but if his fall be curable, from that moment endeavor to raise him up by gentle admonition and brotherly instruction, before you eat, drink, sleep or do anything else, as one who ardently desires his salvation, lest your poor, erring brother harden and corrupt in his fall, and perish in his sin.[66]

Menno makes a strong appeal not to publish a brother's error until the one to whom it is known has personally admonished the erring one. "Do not act so unfaithfully," writes Menno, "as you have hitherto done, as not to make the transgressions of your dying brother or sister known to those within the church before those without. . . ."[67] The proper way would be to "exhort them, and seek by prayer, by words, and by actions to convert him from the error of his way, to save his soul and thus stop the multiplying of his transgressions. Jas. 5."[68]

The one who has erred is counseled to "receive the admonition of his brother, in love, and be again sincerely reconciled." If this procedure is followed, and the transgressing brother does not receive or heed the admonition, excommunication will follow. "For it is evident that he who despises his brother rejects the affectionate admonition, acts against Christian charity, despises the church of God, rejects the word of the Lord."[69] Here it is not the transgression itself which brought on the ban, for "the first transgression may not be of itself a sin unto death,"[70] but the uncharitable attitude which in the course of time causes the individual to "become estranged and carnal." On the other hand, if the transgressor heeds the admonition, he will be forgiven, "although he may have frequently sinned" against the brother.

In a later writing Menno teaches that this admonition does not apply to "all offensive, carnal sinners," but has reference only to the "shortcomings" between brother and brother. Menno then develops seven reasons to explain why a threefold admonition applies only to a sin between brother and brother.[71] He sets up the following Biblical order: "Where one brother transgresses against

[65] *Works,* I, 254.
[66] *Works,* II, 445.
[67] *Loc. cit.* Unfortunately this is a very poor and misleading translation. The German text (*Räber Ausgabe,* II, 628) reads: "Handelt nicht mehr so treulos, wie ihr bis jetzt gethan, dass ihr die Uebertretung eures strauchelnden Bruders (oder eurer Schwester), der noch nicht ermahnt worden, Jemand innerhalb oder ausserhalb der Gemeine mittheilt. . . ."
[68] *Loc. cit.*
[69] *Works,* I, 255.
[70] *Loc. cit.*
[71] *Loc. cit.*

another, three admonitions are given before excommunication (Matt. 18:15-18); to a heretic one or two (Titus 3:10); and to an open, offensive, sensual sinner, who is already condemned by the word of God, none at all."[72]

The "heretic" would be readily recognized since he holds a chosen view of his own apart from the teachings of the Scripture. According to Paul, he holds to such things as "myths, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law."[73] The "open sinners" Menno must describe: "All offensively carnal sinners, such as fornicators, adulterers, drunkards. . . ."[74] Again in another passage he refers to Paul, who says, "Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."[75] These "open sinners" are to be excommunicated without admonition. To substantiate this decision Menno points to I Cor. 5:11 and says, "He [Paul] does not even mention one admonition, much less two or three."[76] Menno also appeals to the example of Paul and says:

> Paul did not only thus teach this doctrine; but also showed it by an open example to the unclean Corinthian who sat with his stepmother in a very unbecoming manner; for without any previous admonition he judged him according to his ungodly works, and excommunicated him, by the word and Spirit of the Lord, from the church. . . .[77]

The congregation of believers, according to Menno, was responsible for the actual administration of discipline. This becomes apparent where Menno discusses the attitude of members to the excommunication of their relatives. One of his arguments as we have seen, was that "pious parents, as well as the church, consent and approve of the excommunication of the apostate children."[78] If they should fail to carry out the ban in their personal relationships, "they would make void their own sentence, which they in common with the church pronounce."[79] From this one can clearly see that discipline was to be a congregational matter rather than the prerogative of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Christian Neff, in discussing the application of the ban within the church, emphasizes the fact that neither priest, nor bishop, nor pope had the right to undertake the excommunication of a member. That remained the duty

[72] *Works,* I, 256.
[73] Titus 3:9.
[74] *Works,* I, 251.
[75] I Cor. 6:9b, 10.
[76] *Works,* I, 252.
[77] *Works,* I, 252.
[78] *Works,* I, 249.
[79] *Loc. cit.*

of the church. Thus, says Neff, it was practiced in the early Anabaptist congregations.[80]

That the congregation must be active in the administration of discipline can also be deducted from the early confessions of the Mennonites. The Schleitheim Confession of 1527 mentions the "brethren and sisters" and states that they shall discipline the erring one "openly . . . before the breaking of bread."[81] The Dordrecht Confession of 1632 says, "The church must put away from among herself him that is wicked whether it be in doctrine or life."[82] This would, of course, be in keeping with the Anabaptist concept of the brotherhood.

Karel Vos, in discussing the administration of discipline, asserts that Menno had not outgrown the Roman Catholic conception of discipline,[83] since Menno says that those exercising the ban were supposed to "sit in the apostles' seat."[84] What Menno teaches is rather that the ban is ineffective and brings judgment upon those who exercise it "if they themselves have not the spirit of Christ, do not sit in the apostles' seat, do not act from pure motives of obedience to God's Word and of upright brotherly love."[85] Furthermore, the above admonition is directed to "all the pious generally, who sit in judgement upon a sinner that is to be excommunicated . . ."[86] Vos's assertion that to the elders alone was entrusted the right to excommunicate cannot be substantiated from Menno's writings. Menno says: "Again it shall be practiced by the church; that is, every one shall not separate at his own pleasure; but it should be done by the congregation of God. . . ."[87]

Menno refers the reader to Matt. 16:18, 19, where the church is given special authority on earth. With this Scripture as his basis, he discusses the two keys: the key of binding and the key of loosing. The key of binding would be used in case of the ban where the church would lock up "under the curse, sin, death, and the wrath of God, [those] who do not by faith receive Christ, the only and eternal means of grace, hear His voice and follow and obey His will."[88] The key of loosing is "the abundantly cheering and delightful word of grace, the pardoning, consoling, and unbinding Gospel of peace,

[80] *Menn. Lex.*, III, 116. "Diese [die Gemeinde] ist alleinige Inhaberin der Vollmacht, den Bann auszusprechen. Ihr allein obliegt auch diese Pflicht. . . . So war es in den Täufergemeinden von Anfang an gefordert und geübt."

[81] John C. Wenger, *Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine* (Scottdale, 1949) 208.

[82] *Ibid.*, 224.

[83] Karel Vos, *Menno Simons* (Leiden, 1914) 200, quoted by Krahn, *op. cit.*, 152.

[84] *Works*, I, 262.

[85] *Works*, I, 262b.

[86] *Loc. cit.*

[87] *Works*, II, 131.

[88] *Works*, I, 261.

by and through which all those are delivered from . . . the wrath of God."[89] Menno is clear when he says that "Jesus Christ alone has the key of David, who unlocks heaven . . . and . . . closes heaven. . . . We are nothing more than heralds, ministers, and messengers in His name."[90] A superficial reading of Menno's treatise would lead to the assumption that Menno has not been entirely freed from the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. However, a careful investigation of the text reveals that for Menno the power and authority upon which the ban rested was the power and authority of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. Unless the church had the backing of the Word, it could not act in a disciplinary measure. "It is evident that they greatly err, who . . . dare separate or excommunicate anyone out of carnal motives, hatred or bitterness, and not purely and solely through the Spirit and word of Christ."[91] Again Menno says: "It is clear that when an open fornicator or adulterer is convinced by two or three witnesses . . . is brought before the church, they have the judging word of the Scriptures, by which they may separate and exclude him. . . ."[92] In his *Kind Admonition or Instruction* Menno re-emphasizes this point: "Therefore, brethren, none is cut off by us or rejected from the communion of the brethren (judge rightly) but those who have already ejected themselves either by false doctrine, or by blamable life, from Christ and His communion."[93]

The executives of the church must carry out the wish of the congregation in matters of discipline. They are to teach concerning the ban. Thus Menno writes: "I entreat elders, teachers, ministers, and deacons, in the love of Christ, that they would not teach this whole matter carelessly and irrationally; but teach . . . in the full fear of God."[94] The ministers are counseled to act "not too rigidly nor too leniently; lest they seethe a kid in its mother's milk."[95]

Of special interest in the administration of the ban is the matter of restoration. The door by which the apostate could re-enter the church was repentance. But this repentance was something more than words; it required the evidence of daily living. He could "promise reformation" but must "show signs of repentance."[96] It was more than "the mere promise to do better, without any evidence of true repentance."[97] The "mere promise" could easily be the "result of shame and hypocrisy."[98] The immediate repentance could easily be a sorrow brought on by the fact that

[89] *Works*, I, 261.
[90] *Works*, I, 263.
[91] *Loc. cit.*
[92] *Works*, I, 263.
[93] *Works*, II, 446.
[94] *Works*, I, 250.
[95] *Loc. cit.*
[96] *Works*, II, 445.
[97] *Works*, I, 251.
[98] *Loc. cit.*

one's sin had been discovered. "Yea, as I have understood, if some of them had not been detected by great wisdom, they would, I fear, have continued in their old course; but as soon as it was disclosed they began to wail and weep."[99] Furthermore Menno writes: "Who could ever be so blinded, that when he has disgraced his neighbor's wife, daughter, or maid, or robbed him of his money, and being seized, spoken to and admonished, that he would not say, 'I am sorry that I did so.' "[100] In such cases, Menno advises that the individual should be "placed outside of the church," but if he truly repents he is to be received back into fellowship.

Apostates must not be received back into fellowship too soon, "though they may seemingly lament and promise much."[101] The true nature of repentance requires that the church "examine more closely the fruits of their repentance for some time."[102] True repentance is a "converted, changed, pious and new heart," which requires a candid confession and a true departure from the evil. Menno points to the excommunication of the brother in I Cor. 5 who "was not received again before the term of a year or longer, as history informs us, till they saw that he sincerely repented, and feared lest he might be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."[103]

There is always a possibility that the erring brother could be insincere and act as though he were truly repentant "just because he does not want to be outwardly thrown out of the communion of the brethren."[104] Here Menno addresses a note of warning to his readers: "But beware, lest he mock his God; for the acceptation of brethren does not avail if we be not accepted of God."[105] "God the righteous Judge does not judge according to the outward appearance, but solely according to the inward intentions of the heart."[106]

If the church is satisfied that the once erring brother has left "the perverse paths of the ungodly and walks again in the paths of the pious," she may "announce to him the grace of Christ and receive him again as a beloved brother in Christ Jesus and greet him with the salutation of his holy peace."[107]

The actual procedure which was followed when someone was reinstated into fellowship is described by Anna Brons. The brother in question appeared before the entire congregation where he was publicly asked to confess that he had aroused God's anger by his transgressions and sins, which had been the cause of his excom-

99 *Works,* I, 252.
100 *Loc. cit.*
101 *Works,* I, 253.
102 *Works,* I, 253.
103 *Loc. cit.*
104 *Works,* II, 445.
105 *Loc. cit.*
106 *Loc. cit.*
107 *Works,* I, 263.

munication from the church. To this the erring brother would reply with "yes." Then a short message by one of ministers or the bishop would point to the importance of repentance and consciousness of guilt. Now the one seeking reinstatement was asked whether he repented of his wrongs with all his heart, and whether he hoped, by His grace, to serve God in the future. Again the brother would give an affirmative reply. Thereupon the bishop or minister would say: "If you have reformed and have been honestly converted, we proclaim to you the grace of God." This was followed by a Scripture verse. The brother was then asked whether the brotherhood should pray for him. Upon his request the church would pray. Finally the bishop would say: "As Paul commanded that we should receive one another as Christ received us, so we receive you . . . also." The reinstated brother was dismissed with a special admonition.[108]

There can be no doubt as to the fate of those who have been banned and do not return in repentance. When they are banned "it should be told them before the church, out of the Word of God, that they had no more fellowship with Christ, but are accursed according to the Scriptures."[109] It is the task of the church, so Menno writes, "to announce to him by the Spirit of Christ, that he is no longer a member of the body of Christ, has no more promise, but shall endure everlasting death. . . . For his works show plainly that he is of the wicked one."[110] Here again it is not the church that pronounces the judgment but rather "the condemnation of God is already pronounced against them by His eternal Spirit and powerful Word, both in heaven and earth; that they have excluded themselves, and by their ungodly works, forsaken the church."[111] The ban with its exclusion from the church was a public statement of what had already happened in the apostate's life.[112]

Menno tries hard to influence the church in such a way that the ban will be administered in love. He points out that God is love and "will be forever, who in the beginning manifested the glorious fruit of love towards His children, He now likewise does this by

[108] Brons, *op. cit.*, 121 f.
[109] *Works*, I, 252.
[110] *Works*, I, 263.
[111] *Works*, I, 251.
[112] Krahn, *op. cit.*, 152. "Bei dem Gemeindeausschluss handelt es sich um eine symbolische Handlung, wie sie in der Taufe bei der Aufnahme in die Gemeinde eine Parallele hat. Was in der Taufe positiv dargestellt wird, vollzieht sich hier negativ. Wie die Taufe nur die Wiedergeburt und die Eingliederung in den Leib Christi versinnbildlicht, so findet im Gemeindeausschluss die Bestätigung statt, dass der Betreffende eigenmächtig eine Rückgliederung vollzogen hat."

His exclusion or separation."[113] But His children must be on the watch that "true evangelical separation is an express fruit of unfeigned love, and not a law of hatred."[114]

In concluding this discussion dealing with the views of Menno on discipline in the church, we should note that Menno did not visualize a "perfect" church coming out of this purifying process. He recognized the limitations of the practice of discipline because "the church can judge only as to the visible; but what is inwardly wicked, and not outwardly apparent to the church, . . . of that God is the judge, for He alone tries the hearts and reins, and not the church."[115]

[113] *Works,* I, 246.

[114] *Works,* I, 132.

[115] *Works,* II, 243. Dr. Kühler in his book, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Doopsgezinden in de Zestiende Eeuw* (1932) makes the statement that the early Mennonites exercised discipline with the hope of constituting a "sinlessly perfect church." Furthermore he claims that they emphasized the idea of perfection for the church rather than for the individual member. For a successful refutation of these erroneous claims see Horsch, "Is Dr. Kuehler's Conception of Early Dutch Anabaptism Historically Sound?" *MQR,* VII (January, 1933, April, 1933).

SPIRITUALIZERS, ANABAPTISTS, AND THE CHURCH

FRANKLIN H. LITTELL

In reviewing for *Church History* Robert Friedmann's excellent volume, *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (1949), Joachim Wach was moved to call for more studies of Anabaptism and related subjects and included the judgment: "One topic needful of being explored more carefully is the relation of C. Schwenckfeld with the Anabaptists."[1] This was an opinion to which the present writer has been moved in his own studies in "The Left Wing of the Reformation," to revert again to Roland H. Bainton's now classical phrase, and he has lately been turning his hand to the running literary battle between Caspar Schwenckfeld and the Anabaptist elders led by Pilgram Marpeck, which took place in and about Strassburg and Augsburg, 1528-42. That this is not a subject protected by obscurity and distance from emotional coloration was made clear to me some time ago by Selina Gerhard Schulz's spirited rejoinders to my review in *The Christian Century* of her filial biography of the spiritual Reformer, *Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561)*.[2] Beyond the scholarly interest and filial concern, this literary controversy is made relevant today by the fact that we are again engaged in some circles in a major struggle between the Spiritualizers and the Churchmen. It is this very practical matter which drew me back to pursue again paths of historical research which I once walked with more rarefied motivation. It seems to me that the quarrel between Schwenckfeld and Pilgram Marpeck is remarkably parallel to present efforts to define the nature of the Christian revelation: to relate the message of the Gospel to universal truths accessible to all wise and inspired spirits on the one hand, or to tie it conclusively to the work of God through the Christian Israel on the other.

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Most of us are at least vaguely familiar with the Troeltschian distinctions between the "Church" and "Sect" patterns of thought and life. What is sometimes forgotten is that the great Christian sociologist, with that instinctive perception which was as much a part of his contribution as the summary from evidence, also distinguished a Third Type. Although he did not develop the concept fully, he described it as:

> . . . that third sociological type of Christian thought, which does not depend, like the Church, upon the institutions, nor like the sect on the

1 *Church History* XIX (1950).
2 Norristown, Pa., 1946.

liberal interpretation of the Law of God in the Bible, but which is an individualism which freely combines Christian ideas with all kinds of other elements, and which is either entirely unrecognized, or else exists alongside of the Church and assumes its necessity for the mass of mankind.

Full of the sense that today it still does represent the highest ethical ideals of humanity, it is still unable easily to formulate for itself the unwritten social programme which the Gospel contains, nor to apply it clearly to the conditions which oppose it. Gradually, in the modern world of educated people, the third type has come to predominate. This means, then, that all that is left is voluntary association with the like-minded people, which is equally remote from church and sect.[3]

The distinction between "Church" and "Sect" is a fruitful one in certain contexts, although it has been overworked of late. The tendency of certain American scholars—to regard the "Church" as a "sect" which has arrived, economically speaking, may be sociologically satisfying; but it adds confusion to any theological undertaking. As a matter of fact, at the formative period of "sectarian Protestantism" the claim was made by the Anabaptists that their belief and practice was that of the True Church; it was the Establishments, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, which had apostatized.[4] This is the authentic Free Church note, and it seems highly invidious at this late date to load it with the *Spottwort,* "sectarian."

A far more significant controversy in the contemporary scene is that between the first and second types on the one hand, and the spiritualizing tendency of emancipated individual religion on the other. In a footnote to his enunciation of a third type Troeltsch suggested the practical problems confronted by an approach which has no doctrine of the church, either "churchly" or "sectarian":

This comes out very plainly in the *Evangelisch-soziale Kongress,* which is in itself so thoughtful and idealistic. Every time it meets, the effort is made to formulate its Christian social ideas in a theological-ethical form, which will not be bound, like that of the sects, to the literal interpretation of the Bible, but which will express the "spirit of the Gospel," but which at the same time will not assert that the essence of religion is contained in the objective character of the Church as an institution, but which takes very seriously the ethical demands of the Gospel in the radical sense. In this, however, this movement has neither the sect community nor the Churches behind it; its supporters are solely individuals whose spirit is "Christian" in a free manner, but whose outlook is thoroughly in harmony with the modern elements in life. There is, however, no organized community in existence which embodies this "spirit"; in reality this spirit is always first of all produced by a church or a sect,

3 Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (N.Y., 1931) I, 378, 381.
4 Franklin H. Littell, "The Anabaptist Doctrine of the Restitution of the True Church," *MQR* XXVI (1950) 33-52. For an enlarged discussion see my *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (American Society of Church History) 1952.

and it is only when it has severed its connection with both these forms of religious life that it becomes simply the "spirit" of Christianity, which is a free principle, quite subjective in character, which, in the absence of any sociological basis of its own, finds it very difficult to do anything effective in social reform at all. At the same time this "Spirit of Christianity" always experiences afresh the difficulties of coming to terms with the natural basis of human society. Its champions desire the spiritual interpretation of the Gospel, and the universality of a Christianity of the people, without the compromises of the Church and without concealing the purely Divine element in the institutional character of the Church. Its champions desire the ethical radicalism of a Society which is built upon the ideal of the Gospel, without the narrowness and pettiness of the sect. It is, however, impossible to carry the "spirit of the Gospel" into practice without some opportunistic restriction to that which is practically possible, and without the resolve not to allow the best to be the enemy of the good. Just as this situation is only intelligible in the light of historical development, so also, on the other hand, it throws a light upon the latter, when compulsory churches or revolutionary sects based upon the voluntary principle have taken the task in hand, and also for their part found it a very difficult and toilsome matter to make an adjustment to the natural basis of social life.[5]

One is reminded of the forceful polemic of Peter Taylor Forsyth, in dealing with parallel spiritualizing tendencies in the British Churches:

The idea of discipline vanished from Church life, and an extravagant idea of personal liberty, imported from the natural democracy, took the first place, vacated by the obedience of faith.

The inviolable freedom of the individual takes the place once kept for this absolute dependence and obedience before God.

Unqualified religious liberty is but love in a mist, and it ends in the convictions of ghosts, the energy of eccentrices, the anarchy of egoists.[6]

If the words "religious freedom" are substituted for the phrase "religious liberty" in the final sentence quoted, the charge can be amply sustained by evidence from events which have occurred since Forsyth first discerned the direction in which our vaunted emancipation was taking us. For the record of the German Christians is plainly the story of freedom from religious discipline ending in the most servile acceptance of discipline dictated by the State.[7] The Spiritualizers have for four hundred years been characterized by their lack of a doctrine of the Church; and in consequence they have regularly accepted as normative the varying "values" of various

5 *Op. cit.*, I, 445.

6 Peter Taylor Forsyth, *Faith, Freedom and the Future* (N.Y. and London, n.d.) 129, 206.

7 Cf. my study, "The German Churches and the Nazis (1933-45)," in a forthcoming volume on the Nature of Totalitarianism, sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and edited by Carl J. Friedrich.

societies and cultures. Where leadership of the Christian Church has fallen into their hands, both theological and ethical discipline has disappeared from the congregations; and, since the spiritualizing thrust is often linked to unrestrained charismatic personalities (new "prophets" of various types) who usurp the authoritative position which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church, the congregations become in turn "audiences." But this is another study.[8]

As Clarence Bouma frequently editorializes in *The Calvin Forum,* a church without discipline is no church at all. Karl Barth, in striving to impress a sense of Christian responsibility upon his colleagues during the church struggle in Germany, has also discussed fully and brilliantly the relationship of Church discipline to maintenance of the integrity of the Christian Gospel and Witness. This is, of course, in Protestant experience a discipline derived "democratically" rather than along a party line whose central switchboard is Rome or Moscow; that is, it is discovered in the midst of the common life in Christ through concerned prayer, study, discussion, and "spiritual wrestling." But no Christian is excused from discipline simply because he is opposed to totalitarian patterns of deriving it! Let Professor Barth speak:

> The Church is in *motion* as she actualizes her confession.
>
> For the Church cannot speak in a merely meditative and discussive manner in the actualization of her confession.
>
> The Church of which we have been speaking is the Evangelical Church in which no one has the right to hold back with his witness and confession until the contents of this are pronounced *de fide* by some higher Church-court. But also for this reason no one has the right to complain when he must listen to such a witness and confession, even although at first this is not yet his own! And he has also no right to complain when he must hear and take notice that the other is *not* bringing forward what he has to say as personal—where possible "only" political—expression of opinion; but that he is bringing it forward in proper form, i.e., in unity with the confession of Jesus Christ, as he sees this, and hence in all seriousness as true binding. Can there be and may there be in the Church speech which is not *binding?* Would it be a witness and confession, if I did not thereby make the "unreasonable demand" of the other that he agree with me? Would we do one another honour dispensing with this "unreasonable demand" and limiting ourselves to pure expressions of our own personal opinions? What have we to say to one another if we do not dare to speak bindingly with each other? Is not the very fact that so wretchedly little binding address is heard in the Church accountable for a goodly share of her misery—is it not perhaps *the* misery?[9]

8 Cf. concluding paragraphs in my study, "Pastoral Care Under Totalitarianism," XIII *Christianity and Crisis* VI (1953) 42-46.

9 Karl Barth, *The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day* (N.Y., 1939) 18, 82-3.

The lack of "bindingness" is a fruit of spiritualizing tendencies in the life of the Church, with their curious combination of universals appealing to every right thinking and feeling person (Sebastian Franck's *Alle guthertzigen Leute)* and rank individualism. And although we rightly treasure our individual liberties in the political democracy, we seriously err in supposing that those of us within the body of Christ are anything less than members one of another—with "unlimited liability" one for the other, and in the end answerable for each other before Him who is the author and judge of our history.

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It is within this general context that the controversy between Caspar Schwenckfeld of the "Spiritualisten" and Pilgram Marpeck of the "Taeufer"[10] assumes concrete historical significance. If we must persist in use of the Troeltschian types, then this controversy of the sixteenth century is distinguished as the first conflict between the "second" and "third" sociological types of Christian life. As the Establishments free themselves and achieve a larger measure of internal integrity, as the Free Churches acquire the culture and perspective which the generations give, the conflict between "first" and "second" church types becomes less and less important. But it is difficult to say what temptations and travail the New Israel must yet live through before the influence of the Spiritualizers is reduced to proportion. Like the Anabaptists, Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld have many more spiritual children than consciously bear the name.

The existence of a "Schwenckfelder Church," which is definitely a product of those who came after the spiritual Reformer rather than of his own intention, should not close our eyes to the likeness of Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Franck. (For that matter, there is some evidence that "Franckists" persisted for two or three generations after the death of *their* master.) And Sebastian Franck, since his peculiar type of emancipated Christian thought has attracted more specialized attention than Schwenckfeld's,[11] is in some respects a

10 A distinction Troeltsch understood very well, although to this day many historians treating the radical Reformers of the sixteenth century fail to comprehend it. See his "Die Taeufer und Spiritualisten," in "Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit," in *Geschichte der Christlichen Religion: Die Kultur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1922).

11 Cf. Walter Glawe's splendid study, *Sebastian Francks unkirchliches Christentum* (Leipzig, 1913); also Arnold Reimann, *Sebastian Franck als Geschichtsphilosoph* (Berlin, 1921); A. Koyre, "Sebastian Franck," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses* VIII (1931) 353-85; Rudolf Kommoss, *Sebastian Franck und Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Berlin, 1934); Hermann Bischof, *Sebastian Franck und deutsche Geschichtsschreibung* (Tübingen, 1857); Otto Borngräber, *Das Erwachen der philosophischen Spekulation der Reformationszeit* (Schwarzenberg i. Sa., 1908). Of monumental significance is the study on which Troeltsch based his own distinctions between "Täufer" and "Spiritualisten": A. Hegler, *Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck* (Tübingen, 1892).

more interesting object of latter-day study. Nor, if our approach were sheerly constructional, should we neglect other leaders of the same period who roved in and out of Anabaptist congregations during the formative decades, 1525-60: Johannes Bünderlin von Linz,[12] Hans Denck,[13] David Joris,[14] and others. These men, also, although of varying degree of influence and profound differences among themselves, represented discordant factors with which the Anabaptists had to come to grips before clearly defining the terms of their Church life and rejecting individualistic spiritualizing mystical tendencies in the left wing. Like the Early Church, the Anabaptists in a new appropriation of the spirit and life of the faith had their Montanists and Gnostics to deal with. The existence of Mennonite and Hutterite congregations today is proof of their success in achieving a coherent church life, distracted by individual prophets on the one hand and enthusiastic revolutionaries on the other; that they were able to resolve inner conflict of such major proportions, at the same time they were subjected to the most savage persecution by state and state-church authorities, can only inspire the wonder and admiration of more comfortably situated latter-day beneficiaries of their faithfulness.

In the achievement of this coherent church life, Pilgram Marpeck—until recently almost unknown even among Mennonites—played a very significant role. His *Verantwortung,* written in 1542 but first published in 1929,[15] served the same purpose as Dirk Philips' *Enchiridion* in the Dutch wing, and his leadership was of definitive import to the relatively short-lived Swiss and South German Anabaptist movement. It is unnecessary here to retrace his life and work, although a footnote may be useful to those who want to learn more about him whom his American biographer called "the Menno Simons of the South."[16]

12 Alexander Nicoladoni, *Johannes Bünderlin von Linz und die Oberösterreichischen Täufergemeinden in den Jahren 1525-1531* (Berlin, 1893).

13 Ludwig Keller, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer* (Leipzig, 1882).

14 Roland H. Bainton, *David Joris: Wiedertäufer und Kämpfer für Toleranz im 16. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1937).

15 J. Loserth, ed. *Pilgram Marbecks Antwort auf Kaspar Schwenckfelds Beurteilung des Buches der Bundesbezeugung von 1542* (Wien und Leipzig, 1929) (*Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der oberdeutschen Taufgesinnten im 16. Jahrhundert*). See pp. 1-53, on Marpeck and the controversy.

16 John C. Wenger, "The Life and Work of Pilgram Marpeck," *MQR* XII (1938) 137-66; this was a special Marpeck number of the *Review.* Cf. also, by the same author, "The Theology of Pilgram Marpeck"; *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (III) (Frankfurt & Weierhof, Pfalz, 1938) 25-34; Johann Loserth, "Studien zu Pilgram Marpeck," in *Gedenkschrift zum 400 jährigen Jubiläum der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten, 1525-1925* (Ludwigshafen a. Rh., 1925); J. Loserth, "Zwei biographische Skizzen aus der Zeit der Widertäfer in Tirol," *Zeitschrift des Ferdinandeums für Tirol und Vorarlberg* XI (1895) 277-302; Horst Quiring, "Die Anthropologie Pilgram Marpecks," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* II (1937) 10-17. Of primary materials, in addition to the *Verantwortung,* see "Confession of Faith Composed at Strassburg (December, 1531-January, 1532)," *MQR* XII (1938) 167-202; Christian Hege, "Pilgram Marpecks Vermahnung," in *Gedenkschrift, op. cit.,* 178-282. The *Testamentserlütterung* has not been reprinted,

On his scholarly contemporary, *Caspar Schwenkfeld,* who "always maintained that the Anabaptists lacked the requisite degree of intellectual fitness to prove their propositions"[17] (a revealing phrase!), a great deal more material is at hand.

The dispute began in correspondence involving two pious women, Helena Streicher of Ulm and Margareta Marschalk of Pappenheim, adhering to the Schwenckfeldian and Anabaptist viewpoints in that order, but in touch with both movements. This overlapping of followings was not unusual. In the first years there had appeared to be considerable agreement between the spiritual reformer and the Anabaptists, and in many lands they suffered a common proscription and persecution. At the end of it, former friendly relations were broken off and Schwenckfeld was placed under the ban by the Anabaptist elders.

They began with a common discontent with the half-way measures of the Reformers, a common resentment toward those who persecuted men of dissenting opinions, a common vision of the glories of the apostolic church and its coming restitution. Schwenckfeld's expression of esteem for the early Luther could, with the exception of one slighting phrase, stand as an expression of Anabaptist opinion:

> Dr. Martin Luther says in Article 11 in the Confession submitted to the Augsburg diet that neither the Confessional shall be compulsory, nor Baptism, sacrament, or Gospel, but free. And in Article 12: That there is no doubt but that there is and will be a holy Christian Church on earth, to the end of the world. This church is the believers in Christ, and is not bound by laws and external splendor, to place and time, to person and manners, says Dr. Luther. We regard this as rightly spoken, taught and written concerning Christian liberty, and concerning the church of Christ which is confined neither here nor there, neither to Rome, Wittenberg, Zurich, *(with the Anabaptists in Moravia),* nor elsewhere. The Lord knoweth them that are his.[18] *(Italics mine. F.H.L.)*

And his reply to Jacob Sturm of Strassburg contained a clear statement on religious liberty which not only the Anabaptists of his time but American churchmen today could affirm:

although Wenger located two copies, in Zürich and Berlin; Marpeck's *Ain klarer undt nutzlicher Unterricht,* written against Bünderlin, perished in a fire in Strassburg, 1870.

17 Selina Gerhard Schultz, *op. cit.,* 285. In addition to works already cited the following are basic: Emanuel Hirsch, "Zum Verständnis Schwenckfelds," in *Festgabe für Karl Müller* (Tübingen, 1922) 145-70; Karl Ecke, *Schwenckfeld, Luther und der Gedanke einer apostolischen Reformation* (Berlin, 1911). For primary sources, see James Leslie French, ed., *The Correspondence of Caspar Schwenckfeld of Ossig and the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, 1535-1561* (Leipzig, 1908); and the magnificent *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum* (Norristown, Pa., and Hartford, Conn., 1907), edited by Chester D. Hartranft, Elmer E. S. Johnson, Selina G. Schultz, *et al.,* 14 volumes to date. A bibliography on the relation of Schwenckfeld and the Anabaptists is found in VII, 161 f.

18 Quoted in Schultz, *op. cit.,* 179.

. . . civil authority has no jurisdiction over the Kingdom of God; that government was divinely ordained for the sole purpose of maintaining life in human society, but has no right either to influence or to interfere with religious convictions; the individual is accountable to Jesus Christ as the head of the Kingdom of God.

The state is ill-informed and badly advised in assuming control of religion. . . . A State official may be a Christian, but it does not follow, therefore, that the State can have power over the Church, or that it is necessarily Christian. Christian government, a name of recent invention, is nowhere mentioned by Paul. The untoward condition arising from a failure to observe these principles could have been obviated had the civil authorities confined themselves to their distinctive duties and the preachers attended to their pulpits, instead of frequenting municipal halls to intimidate officials.[19]

As the controversy took shape, however, it became clear that Schwenckfeld not only denied the state any disciplinary authority in religious matters but was opposed to discipline resting in the hands of the Church as well. He was opposed to all "sectarianism" and "forms," terming those which the Anabaptists considered basic New Testament ordinances a new captivity of the individual conscience. The Anabaptists, reading their Bibles, settled upon certain basic institutions in the Church order: "Believers' Baptism, Spiritual Government (including use of the Ban, marrying in the faith, Council of Elders), practice of Community (sharing; among the Hutterites communism of consumption), the Lord's Supper, nonresistance.[20] Schwenckfeld, on the other hand, regarded these as extraneous to the work of the Holy Spirit. When Philipp of Hesse asked him for instruction in regard to Baptism, he replied he would rather not discuss the matter: Infant Baptism was unscriptural, an ordinance of man, but he would not be a re-baptizer either; neither form was that important to true faith.[21] He considered the use of the Ban by the Church as great a tyranny as control of conscience by the State. Against both Lutheran and Anabaptist parties he contended that no true apostolic church yet existed, that its locus was where two or three were gathered freely together, and that the work of gathering and ordering a church in the formal sense could only be undertaken when God sent a prophet for that particular purpose. In the meantime, he and his followers would "stand still"—that is, would not separate from the standing order, but gather in loosely formed prayer and study circles. Schwenckfeld was a forerunner of Pietism; "the evangelical Taeufer" were the first Free Churchmen.

19 *Ibid.*, 311-12.
20 Cf. Franklin H. Littell, *op. cit.*, Chapter IV.
21 James Leslie French, ed., *op. cit.*, 65. See also his "Von dem Kindertauf," *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum* III, 812-24.

To Pilgram Marpeck and his colleagues, the "Stillstand" looked like deliberate cowardice in the face of persecution suffered by any who did take the Biblical covenant and ordinances thereof seriously. The *Verantwortung,* termed by Robert Friedmann "This most thorough and most profound debate of Anabaptism with all those who wanted to look at Christianity only from the pleasant and friendly side," is here worth quoting:

> Schwenckfeld teaches only the inward experience and the transfigured, glorified, unsuffering Christ in Heaven, and not the suffering one on Earth, yea, he teaches only the Word of his glory and splendor, and not of his cross and affliction as he bore it before his transfiguration and ascension and as it is still today fitting for his unglorified body to bear.[22]

If he looked down upon their lack of sophistication, they feared his speculative and spiritualizing mind *(Hochgelersamkeit)* and referred back to "the unlettered son of a carpenter out of whom your philosophy has fabricated such a high Christ."[23] Suffering was basic to Anabaptist eschatology, and the effect to avoid it by "standing still" was disregarded for historical responsibility. The church as the suffering body of Christ is a high doctrine and their faithful espousal of it is another indication that these early heroes of sectarian Protestantism deserve to have their place in Christian history reassessed.

The Anabaptists, although giving primacy to the working of the Holy Spirit (which they understood in a far less promiscuous way than Schwenckfeld), taught that in this life the spiritual and material cannot be so radically separated. The teaching of Christ is transmitted to us by a fleshly tongue; the Bible does not divide the whole man, but speaks of *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism. Against Schwenckfeld's judgment of all such *"parteyisch"* efforts, for their imperfection, they finally rejoined:

> Wäret Ihr zur Zeit Christi und der Apostel auf der Erde gewesen, Ihr mit Eurem hohen Geist, ich besorge, Ihr hättet Christum und seine Kirche ebenso wenig gefunden als zur jetzigen Zeit.[24]

This is the hardheaded retort of those who firmly believed God had called them to be His people and were prepared to live and die by that conviction. That their feet were soundly planted in history is evident throughout the *Verantwortung,* in passages such as this:

> *Antwurt:* Das Schwenckfeld alhie die guetherzigen von der Tauffer bruederschaft ermant, sagen wir, das wir kein andere tauffbruederschaft

22 Robert Friedmann, *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (Goshen, 1949) 29.
23 *Ibid.,* quotation on p. 82.
24 Quoted by J. Loserth, "Studien zu Pilgram Marpeck," *loc. cit.,* 150.

wissen, dann die bruderschaft Christi; die durch einen h, geist zu einem leib taufft seind, die durch waren lebendigen glauben in der leer, red und bevelch Christi bleiben und also junger, freund und brueder Christi seind und einen gott haben und sich an Christo dem haubt halten, als man uns dann noch mit grund nit anderst aus unser obberuerten ersten zeugknus erwisen hat.[25]

This is the point of view of those who have learned not to allow the speculative perfect to destroy the integrity of the temporal imperfect. It is the confession of those who live as a pilgrim people in human history, and look for both the present and the final fulfillment of God's promises to those whom He finds faithful. Of Schwenckfeld's dispute with the Anabaptist elders we may conclude as was done of a larger circle, to which the spiritual Reformer also belonged:

"The humanist was a scholar, the Anabaptist a disciple."[26]

When Marpeck was expelled from Strassburg, he wrote of Butzer and his colleagues that:

They have not preached freely under the Cross of Christ, but under the umbrella of the nobles and the cities. Therefore it is not to be wondered that the word of God brought no fruit. To this day there is no Christian order in Strassburg.[27]

Marpeck was dedicated to rectifying that situation, wherever there were ears to hear and souls to accept baptism. One of the few Anabaptist leaders to die a natural death, he came to the end of his years leaving the record of a faithful shepherd of a covenantal people, a church. That church was a certain and logical consequence of patient statesmanship. That Schwenckfeld's name is still carried by a church body, is, so far as his own work is concerned, an historical accident.

25 Loserth, ed., *op. cit.*, 173.
26 Robert Kreider, "Anabaptism and Humanism," *MQR* XXVI (1952) 123-41.
27 Loserth, "Zwei biographische Skizzen . . . ," quotation on p. 282.

A SIXTEENTH CENTURY DESCRIPTION OF RELIGIOUS SECTS IN AUSTERLITZ, MORAVIA

HENRY A. DEWIND

In the Venetian State Archives[1] under the date January 21, 1568, there is a deposition, made to the Inquisitorial authorities by one Marcantonio Varotto of Venice, describing the encounter of this man with various Protestant groups in France, Switzerland, north Italy, and Moravia. Those portions of the deposition which relate to conditions in Austerlitz are of particular interest for Anabaptist history, and will therefore be presented here.[2]

Varotto, a weaver of taffetas and painter of battle-standards, left Venice in May, 1564, to go to Lyon, France. A traveling-companion persuaded him to visit Geneva before returning home, and he, being curious about the faith of the "Lutherans" there and hoping to learn about them from Italians resident in Geneva, consented to make the trip. In Geneva, Varotto met a number of these Italians, took part in their church services, and even joined the congregation of St. Germain. He was also admitted to citizenship in Geneva. Not completely satisfied with conditions there, Varotto left after about a year, going to Turin, where he lived for about five months, to all appearances a good Catholic. He then returned to Venice by way of Milan and Mantua. In Venice the master for whom he worked learned that he had acquired heretical views and attempted to convert him back to Catholicism. But Varotto had not lost his wanderlust and the succeeding months saw him in Milan, Rome, Siena, Venice again, Udine, Trieste, and even Vienna. Hearing of the Protestants in Moravia, he determined to go there; it is his experiences of the two months he spent in Moravia that the excerpts of his deposition here printed relate. Upon his journey back toward Italy Varotto fell ill and decided to return to the Roman Catholic Church. He made his deposition to the "Vicar of the Patriarch" at Udine. Excerpts from the deposition follow.[3]

1 Venezia, S. Uffizio, Busta no. 22. Varotta Marcantonio. I have used a photostat of a transcript of this document which was made available to me through the kind permission of Roland H. Bainton and the Yale University Library. References to the deposition are to be found in Bainton, *Bernardino Ochino* (Firenze, 1940), 159-60, and in K. Benrath, "Wiedertäufer im Venetianischen um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, LVIII (1885), 55-57.

2 I should like to thank Dr. Robert Friedmann for his many helpful suggestions in making this document useful. A word should be added about the reliability of Varotto. It must be remembered that this man was naive as far as Protestant religious ideas were concerned. Then, too, he reported his observations to the Inquisition while he was under considerable stress. Therefore one need not be surprised if there are inaccuracies in what he has to say about the sects in Moravia. We need not, however, doubt his veracity, only the complete accuracy of his observations and the thoroughness of his understanding.

3 I am grateful to Dr. Elio Gianturco of Pennsylvania State College for his kind help in checking my translation.

Then I went to Vienna, intending to go to Cracow in Poland in the hopes of finding employment. A saintly bookseller, who is either a Venetian or a Paduan and has a bookshop in Vienna and one in Cracow, told me that I should travel through Moravia; and since I knew that there were in Moravia some Anabaptists and numerous [other] sects, and since I desired to speak with them and learn their opinions, I decided to go into Moravia. Thus I proceeded to Moravia and arrived in Austerlitz, in the land of Moravia,[4] where there were many Italians. Since I was aware of this, I went to find them, especially one Mr. Nicolo Paruta,[5] a Venetian citizen, who lived there and is married and has both houses and vineyards of his own. . . . He welcomed me and housed me with great kindness while I was in Austerlitz. He is an Anabaptist and Samosatian and he continually attempted to persuade me to reject that article concerning the baptism of little children. Later in Vienna I laid aside this teaching because of my reading the Acts of the Apostles. . . . I found that some of the Apostles had baptized certain families and households of working men, and I realized that it was impossible that in those families and households there should not have been any small children baptized along with the adults; thus I abandoned that teaching concerning the baptism of children.

I left Moravia because during the two months I spent there I saw so many faiths and so many sects, the one contrary to the others and the one condemning the others, all drawing up catechisms, all desiring to be ministers, all pulling this way and that, all wishing to be the true church. In one place alone, and that small enough, called Austerlitz, there are thirteen or fourteen kinds of sects. . . .

The description of the sects in Moravia and the persons who are in Moravia and in Geneva that I saw and those who are in various heretical places is already in the hands of Your Reverence and I reaffirm that that is a true statement. However, for my greater consolation and in order to discharge as best I can my obligation I will repeat: . . .

In Moravia are the following [sects]: the Picards [Bohemian Brethren], the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Austerlitzians, the Cornelians, the Cappellarians,[6] the Josephins, the Sabbatarians, the Arians, the Samosatians, the Swiss (whose minister is one Vidal, a Savoyard), and three others whose names I do not know because they have no names and have few followers and are excommunicated by the other eleven sects. These three have no ministers and their opinions are held by few. Among these persons who have been excommunicated by the others is one who is called Il Motes [Matthis?], a learned German who studies all day long. The other eleven sects all have ministers and preachers. The minister of the Cornelians is one named Paul, a German who, however, speaks Italian. All these sects agree together on many things, but each has some particular article different from the others and they all

4 In August, 1567.

5 On Paruta see R. Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography* (London, 1850), II, 102-3. From a distinguished family of Lucca (although he was later a Venetian citizen), he fled to Geneva in the early 1540's and was a member of the Italian Protestant congregation there. He went from Geneva to Poland and some time thereafter settled in Austerlitz. It is clearly evident that Paruta had no organic connection with the Hutterites despite their co-residence in Austerlitz and despite the tendency of various writers to class him as an Anabaptist. Paruta was a well-to-do man who owned a house, with a well-stocked library, as well as vineyards.

6 From what follows it will be seen that Varotto, when he used the designation "Cappellarians," was talking about the Hutterites. This usage is understandable if we remind ourselves that the name of the founder of this sect, Jacob Hutter, means Jacob "Hatter" or "Hatmaker"; see J. Horsch, *The Hutterian Brethren* (Goshen, Ind., 1931), 9, n. 15. The Italian for "hat" is *"cappello"* and for "hat-maker" is "cappelleio."

have different catechisms. The Picards, Lutherans, and Austerlitzians accept infant baptism; the other [major] sect does not accept it but baptizes only adults, and they, the Cappellarians, who are the same as the Anabaptists, have this custom: however many times a person leaves them and later returns, so many times do they rebaptize him. Thus also do the Josephins. These Cappellarians are in greater numbers than all the other sects and they are rich because many rich persons have given them their property to hold in common. It is their custom that in every land in which they find themselves they live together in one house as in a monastery, and they eat and drink and wear shoes all in common, poor and rich alike in those things that they wear. The fact is that the ministers lead an abundant life and hold in their hands the management of everything; on travels where others go by foot with walking sticks, they travel by horse and coach. Among them it is customary that if the members of the sect are wronged by being struck or robbed or having their wives carried off or any other, they offer no resistance; should they put up any resistance, they are driven away or excommunicated by their ministers.

The Josephins hold that our Lord was not conceived by the Holy Spirit but carnally by the seed of Joseph. The Samosatians maintain that the Son is not equal to the Father, nor of the substance of the Father, but that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit sent from God to announce the Gospel and peace and reconciliation with God. They further contend that though He is as powerful as God He was made by God; in short, they deny the Trinity, in that they deny that the Holy Spirit is God. Instead they say that the Holy Spirit is that power of God which kindles and inspires hearts to believe in the promises of His design and in the Gospel; this power is further shown in various modes: in fiery flames, because like fire it kindles the hearts to believe swiftly, and in the dove that purifies and cleanses the heart of false opinions.

The Arians similarly distinguish between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit like the Samosatians, but they have some different articles among themselves.[7]

In this respect all these sects, as well as that of Geneva, agree: they are against the Roman Catholic Church in this that neither in baptizing nor in any other rite do they make the sign of the cross whether upon themselves or upon any other object. The Lutherans, however, have in their churches the image of the Crucifix and in preaching they use the stole and the surplice as the Catholics do.

This remarkable document allows a number of valuable conclusions and comments pertinent to the study of this history of sectarian movements during the sixteenth century, in particular in Moravia.

7 It is noteworthy that even to Varotto there were clear distinctions among the Moravian sects on such questions as adherence to the doctrine of the Trinity and that he does not charge the Hutterites with any anti-Trinitarian teachings. The term "Samosatians" was generally used both by Catholics and Lutherans during the sixteenth century to mean anti-Trinitarians. The Augsburg Confession of 1530, for instance, expressly condemns "Samosatians." The term goes back to Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch from about 260 to 272 A.D. This man taught that the *Logos* was an impersonal attribute of the Father and that Jesus was a man filled however with the *Logos*, W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York, 1947), 72-73. Paul was excommunicated in 269 A.D. but only driven out of his episcopal chair by the emperor Aurelian in 272, *ibid.*, 105-6. Paul was thus a forerunner of Arius.

(1) Varotto states specifically that there were thirteen or fourteen different kinds of sects in Austerlitz at the time of his visit, that is, in 1567. His is the earliest specific reference we have to this prolixity of sects in the region so well known by the story of the Hutterites. J. Beck[8] speaks of Picards (Bohemian Brethren) being introduced into Austerlitz as early as 1511 by the lords of Kaunitz, and adds that this territory still had the reputation in the early seventeenth century as the "dove-cote of all sectarians." He names eleven sects listed by one Stredovsky in a manuscript, followed by the Jesuit Schmidl (early seventeenth century).[9] Beck cites the confirmatory statement of the Bohemian supreme Chancellor Slavata (ca. 1608) that in some Moravian towns in excess of twelve sects were to be found. Beck, however, expresses doubt that Austerlitz at any time was the home of the sects named by Stredovsky except for the Hutterites, the Austerlitzians, and (presumably) the Bohemian Brethren, adding that there were only sporadic signs of anti-Trinitarianism. Varotto's testimony now provides us assurance that Beck's doubt was not too well founded.

It so happens that we have two more such contemporary informations concerning the enormous spread of sectarianism in the second half of the sixteenth century, prior to the vigorous counter-actions of the Roman church. One is found in the polemical book, *Evangelische Inquisition,* of 1573 (second edition in 1580) of the learned jurist Georg Eder (1523-86), one of the most radical champions of the Counter Reformation in Austria and Bavaria. In the chapter called *Ketzertanz,* he enumerates not less than forty sects of so-called "Anabaptists," confining them, however, not to a specific location (though it is possible that he might have thought of Moravia).[10] A cursory glance at his list shows its highly uncritical and polemical nature, reflecting the mixture of knowledge and myth, so typical for the religious struggle of that time. He is then followed by another representative of the growing Counter Reformation, Christoph Erhard, parish priest of Nikolsburg, Moravia, 1583-89. In his similarly slanderous book, *Von der Münsterischen Widertauff* (1589), he, too, lists not less than forty sects, now expressly locating them in Southern Moravia.[11] Thirty-five of these names he lifted verbatim from Eder's list, adding five more of which he apparently had personal knowledge in and around Nikolsburg.

8 *Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer,* ed. Joseph Beck, *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum,* XLIII (1883), 74, n. "c."

9 See list below for these.

10 Georg Eder, *Evangelische Inquisition* (Dillingen, 1573), 57-60. On Eder cf. *Menn. Lex.* I.

11 Christoph Erhard, *Gründliche, kurz verfasste Historia Von der Münsterischen Wiedertauff* (Munich, 1588), fol. Bii. On Erhard cf. *Menn. Lex.* I, 606-8.

It should prove enlightening to study side by side these four lists of sectarian proliferation as we have them from Eder, Erhard, Beck (Stredovsky), and our latest informant, Marcantonio Varotto, and then compare their reliability and usefulness.

(A) *George Eder's list* (1573) together with a condensation of his explanations:

1. Müntzerites	[followers of Thomas Müntzer]
2. Adamites	run around naked in the woods
3. Staff-bearers	refuse the sword [*Staebler,* in the late 1520's]
4. Sabbatarians	observe Sabbath; accept only Father of the Trinity
5. Secretive, also called Garden Brothers	meet secretly and hide their beliefs
6. Open Witnessers	confess their doctrines openly (Anabaptists)
7. Devilers	Devil will be saved on Judgment Day [cf. no. 33 c]
8. Free-livers	(Libertines) have wives in common
9. Cohabiters	have wives in common
10. Grubenheimers	[nos. 8, 9, 10 refer apparently to the same group]
11. Weeping Brothers	hold highly emotional prayer-meetings
12. David Georgians	[after David Joris]
13. Mennonites	deny Christ's human nature
14. Purists (Cathari)	Anabaptists who believe that they are sinless
15. Silent Ones	no preaching, practice silence
16. Apostolics	practice complete poverty
17. Barefooted Brothers	do not touch any money
18. Spiritualists or Separatists	bear neither knives nor swords
19. Praying Brothers	emphasize prayer meetings [cpr. 11]
20. Visionaries or Enthusiasts	believe in dreams and visions
21. "Adamers"	from Adam Pastor [Holland], deny Trinity

22. Hypocritical Ones	are indifferent to all liturgical ceremonies
23. Huttites	[perhaps from Hans Hut]
24. Ambrosians	reject both Testaments [Inspirationalists]
25. Augustinians	believe in sleep of souls till Judgment Day
26. Hofmannites	deny Christ's human nature [after Melchior Hofmann]
27. Münsterite Brothers	[from Münster, Germany]
28. Scripturists and Paulinists	accept only Paul's writings
29. Kesselgeist	[?]
30. Priest Murderers	
31. Bloodthirsty Ones	drink human blood
32. Libertines	"Quintinists" in France, Christ is the devil; sin is virtue
33. [All Anabaptists]	
a. Interpreters of the Resurrection too spiritually	
b. Interpreters of the Resurrection too bodily	
c. Universalists	all will be saved eventually, even the devil
34. Antichristians	Christ died on cross and was damned
35. Judaizers	deny that Christ is Messiah, wait for another Messiah like the Jews
36. Antichristians	worship a mythical harlot mother of the Antichrist
37. Devil-worshippers	praise devil ten times daily
38. Epicureans	

(B) *Erhard* (1589) prints all of these (without explanations) except Nos. 33 (a,b,c), 36, and 37, and adds the following five:

1. Gabrielites	[after Gabriel Ascherham]
2. Austerlitzians	[see Varotto's list, no. 4]
3. Swiss Brethren	
4. Pilgrim Brothers	[after Pilgram Marpeck?]
5. Hutterites	

(C) *Stredovsky's list* (around 1600) (in Beck, *Geschichts-Bücher)*

1. Lutherans
2. Calvinists

(D) *Varotto's list* (1567):

1. Picards
2. Lutherans

3. Sabbatarians	3. Calvinists
[Eder no. 4, Varotto no. 8]	
4. Fratres flebiles	4. Austerlitzians
[Weeping Brothers]	[Erhard No. 2]
5. Picards	5. Cornelians
[Bohemian Brothers]	
6. Hussites	6. Cappellarians
7. Jews	[Hutterites]
8. Cornelians	7. Josephins
[see Varotto's list no. 5]	[?]
9. Anabaptists	8. Sabbatarians
[Hutterites?]	
10. Zwinglians	9. Arians
[Calvinists?]	
11. Adamites	10. Samosatians
[Eder no. 2]	[9 & 10 the same?]
	11. Swiss
	12-14. Unnamed

This long and obviously not definitive list of sects, [11a] many of which were overlapping in their tenets, nevertheless has its values. For one thing, that portion of it drawn from Eder and Erhard supplies us with an example of the methods used by the Counter Reformation. The purpose of Eder and Erhard in publicizing such lists was to aid in the fight against heretics, and unquestionably slanderous contentions about the Anabaptists, such as contained in these lists, contributed materially to their harassment and eventual rooting out. The polemical character of the writings of these two men is apparent when we analyze their lists even casually. For example,

11a Robert Friedmann has just called my attention to an incomplete list dating from November 18, 1556, which has all the appearances of being either the source for Eder's list or a companion list drawn from the same place as Eder's. The relevant passage, which is printed in Manfred Krebs, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*, Vol. IV, *Baden und Pfalz* (Gütersloh, 1951), p. 511 (Number 586), is quoted below:
"1556, Nov. 18. *Verzeichnis wiedertäuferischer Sekten* Der Speyrische Reichstagsgesandte Wendel Artzt übersendet an Bischof Rudolf von Speyr ein lateinisches Verzeichnis der Sekten,. Darin werden angeführt:
(12) Schwenckfeldiani
(13) Anabaptistae Monasterienses
(14) Anabaptistae Huterani
(15) Anabaptistae Stäblarii
(16) Anabaptistae Schwerterii
(17) Anabaptistae Osterlicii [Austerlitzer Brüder]
(18) Anabaptistae Helvetii, Schweyzer brueder
(19) Lutherani iconomachi. Bildstürmer
(20) Anabaptistae demonisalvi, de quibus Augustae [Augsburg] anno 1530 inter caetera tractatum fuit, qui dicunt etiam demones salvari" [i.e. that even the demons may be saved].

they group together without discrimination the names of sects which existed neither at the same time nor at the same place. Robert Friedmann called my attention to the fact that the David Jorists existed only in the Netherlands, the Hofmannites in Holland and around Strassburg up to about 1545, the Münsterites only around Münster (1534-5) and the adjacent parts of the Low Countries, the Adamites or "Naked-runners" (comparable to the Russ. Dukhobors) only in the Netherlands around 1530, etc. Erhard drew the bulk of his list from Eder, and Eder in turn had no personal experiences with the sectarians whatsoever but relied on other Catholic sources some of which he acknowledged.[11b] Eder and Erhard then must be used with exceptional caution if we are to learn something about the real status of the sectaries in Moravia.

On the other hand, the testimonies of Varotto and Stredovsky appear to be highly credible. Varotto had no reason to distort the situation in Austerlitz, and his words have the ring of truth. In their way they lend weight also to Stredovsky's compilation which likewise seems to be highly probable.

These lists reveal, however, not only some of the methods of the Counter Reformation; they do also dramatize to a certain extent the astonishing liquidity of religious affiliation and loyalties in the sixteenth century, a situation rather uncommon in Europe although well familiar to the American mind. The multiplication of sects was fairly general in the earlier period of the Reformation (since about 1520), but gradually eased up as the new state churches strengthened their hold, or as the Counter Reformation swung into full action. In Moravia, however, the Counter Reformation (to which belonged Erhard, and the Cardinal Franz von Dietrichstein who was active in Nikolsburg since 1599) did not bring an end to this fluid situation until early in the seventeenth century. Thus the Hutterites could continue to grow, and liquidity in sectarian allegiance could persist in Moravia longer than elsewhere.

(2) Varotto's testimony reminds us again of the unusual religious toleration practiced by numerous manorial lords in the Moravia-Slovakia region. John Horsch pointed to the economic motives

11b As such sources we find the following three references: (1) Dr. Johann Eck (the well known opponent of Luther), *Contra Confess. Zwinglii* (1530); (2) Friedrich Staphylus (1512-1564), earlier a Lutheran theologian but later a convert to Catholicism and professor at Ingolstadt. He wrote *Theol. Martini Lutheri trimembris epitome,* 1558, which contains a sort of genealogy of all "heretics"; Eder quotes that book as *Genealogia Lutheranismi,* and *De concordantia Lutheranorum;* (3) Wilhelm D. Lindanus, Catholic bishop of Roermund, Holland, (1525-1588). Of his numerous works Eder quotes *Dubitantius de vera. . . ,* Cologne, 1565, and a work *"Antilutheranorum"* (unknown date).
These men and their books then represented the arsenal of the revived attacks upon both the Lutheran church and the sectarians.

which apparently underlay this toleration policy.[12] Noteworthy among such tolerant lords were Johann von Liechtenstein, lord of Nikolsburg (d. 1552); Ulrich von Kaunitz, lord of Austerlitz; the Abbess of Maria-Saal at Auspitz; Johann von Leipnik or Lipna, lord of Kromau and Schakovitz; and Heinrich von Lomnitz, lord of Jamnitz.[13] The list could readily be multiplied.

(3) Varotto supplies us with additional evidence of the presence of anti-Trinitarianism in Moravia. His "Arians" and "Samosatians" belong in that category, as the document explicitly shows (cf. his remarks on these two sects). These people, largely if not exclusively Italians, are mentioned in various scattered sources.[14] They were easily confounded with the other sectarians in Moravia and generally classed as Anabaptists, thus creating the confusion which surrounds the precise status of the Hutterites.[15] By making distinctions among the different sects drawn to Moravia by the prospect of toleration we may understand how anti-Trinitarians and Hutterites could inhabit the same area, remaining distinct from each other but a source of confusion to most transient observers.

Of such transients there must have been many, at least during the time that Poland was serving as a center of liberal religious thought. There was a fairly direct route from Vienna via Moravia to Cracow, and this route was taken by many of the Italians who played so large a part in the Polish Reformation movement.[16] Undoubtedly the Polish Minor Reformed Church learned of the Hutterites in this way.[17] It is helpful to be reminded of these travel routes, for in that way we can better understand how the flood of

12 Horsch, *The Hutterian Brethren* (Scottdale, 1931), 13-15.

13 On Johann von Liechtenstein see Beck, *op. cit., passim.* On Ulrich von Kaunitz see Horsch, *op. cit.,* 10-15, and J. Loserth, "Der Communismus der mährischen Wiedertäufer," *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte,* LXXXI (1894), 142. For the Abess of Maria-Saal see *Kleingeschichtebuch der Hutterischen Brüder* (ed. Zieglschmid) (Philadelphia, 1947), 25. Concerning Johann von Leipnik see *Chronik* (ed. Zieglschmid), 250 note, and R. Friedmann's note in *MQR* (April, 1953), 136. There is a reference to Heinrich von Lomnitz in Beck, *op. cit.,* 152.

14 See, for example, E. von Kaussler and T. Schott (eds.), *Briefwechsel zwischen Christoph, Herzog von Württemberg und Petrus Paulus Vergerius,* in *Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart,* CXXIV (1875), No. 61a, p. 167, where the ex-bishop Vergerio reports on their presence in 1558. R. H. Bainton describes Ochino's presence and death in Austerlitz in 1564 or 1565, *op. cit.,* 158, drawing on S. Lubieniecius, *Historia Reformationis Polonicae* (Freistadii, 1685), 110-11. On Varotto's host, N. Paruta, see R. Wallace, *op. cit.,* II, 102-3.

15 As able a scholar as E. M. Wilbur falls into this error of terminology (actually of insufficient preciseness) when he says certain Italian anti-Trinitarians such as Giorgio Negri, Pietro Leone, and Dario Sozzini (a relative of the more famous Lelio and Fausto Sozzini) obtained haven in the "Anabaptist" colony in Moravia, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and its Antecedents* (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 235, n. 51. The error is an old one. The anti-Trinitarian Valentino Gentile is said to have had relations with the Anabaptists in Moravia: "Itaque Polonia eiectus, Moraviam addit, ubi cum Anabaptistis multa contulit," B. Aretius, *Valentini Gentilis,* in *Loci communes Christianae religionis* (Bernae Helvetiorum, 1604), 570.

16 On this subject in general see Wilbur, *op. cit.*

17 On the unsuccessful negotiations between these two groups around 1568-70, looking toward their union, see Wilbur, *op. cit.,* 354-55; Bainton, *op. cit.,* 160-61; T. Wotschke, *Geschichte der*

new ideas that permeated sixteenth century Europe actually were spread about. Thus Varotto, in addition to the description of sects in Moravia, supplies us with a rare insight into what has too often been an obscure problem.

Reformation in Polen, Vol. I of *Studien und Quellen zur Kultur und Geschichte der Reformation* (Leipzig, 1911), 224-25; R. Wolkan (ed.), *Geschicht-Buch der Hutterischen Brüder* (Wien, 1923), 339-43, carries the Hutterite version of these dealings. Cf. also R. Friedmann, "The Encounter of Anabaptists and Mennonites with Anti-Trinitarianism," *MQR*, XXII (1948) 154-58.

EDITORIAL (Continued from page 2)

opposing views in the first half of the 16th century, he turns more than a side glance to modern American and European Christendom. Do we today, like Schwenkfeld of old, evade the full witness of life to the Gospel in the real building of the visible obedient church of Christ, avoiding the price of conflict and suffering? The essence of Anabaptism was to put into life and works here and now the teaching and example of Christ, the entire Gospel, and thus restore the true intention of the New Covenant. In this attempt they reckoned with suffering, because they took up the battle with the "world"; Schwenkfeld deliberately called an armistice in this battle, and retreated to the realms of mysticism and irresponsibility. (In the point at issue, Schwenkfeld furnishes a good illustration, particularly since he boldly took up the battle against the Anabaptists—witness his literary war with Marpeck. Whether on other points he can be fully classed with the spiritualizers such as Franck and Denk might be questioned: he really was to a certain extent a theological Lutheran.)

IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE REFORMATION A FREQUENT CONFUSION HAS been that between the Anabaptists and the Anti-Trinitarians, a confusion that has persisted in certain quarters down to the present. The blinded understanding of the Reformers concerning the Anabaptists made them easy victims of this confusion, particularly since there were points of historical contact between the two movements, such as in the Grisons of Switzerland, North Italy, and Poland. The interesting Venetian document of 1568, hitherto not published, which is presented by and elucidated by Henry DeWind in this issue, together with the reports on additional listing of so-called "kinds of Anabaptists" and related religious groups by Eder (1573), Erhard (1589), and Stredovsky (Beck) of *ca.* 1600, illustrates how confusion could arise. DeWind's Varotto document also reinforces our previous reports of the unusual degree of toleration in Moravia and increases substantially our knowledge of the presence of Anti-Trinitarianism there.

AT LAST WE HAVE FROM THE PEN OF ROBERT FRIEDMANN AN AUTHORITATIVE and almost exciting solution of one of the minor mysteries of Anabaptist history, the "Thessalonian brethren" who occasionally cross the pages of Anabaptist chronicles and even appear in the *Martyrs' Mirror*. The late A. J. F. Zieglschmid had once made an attempt at a solution in a footnote (p. 19) of his article "Die Ungarischen Wiedertaeufer bei Grimmelshausen" published LIX (1940) in *Ztscht f. Kirchengesch.* Friedmann's material unfolds an interesting historical detective story. He proves that there were actually some Thessalonian Christian travelers who almost became Hutterites but preferred the Swiss brethren position, and possibly visited Holland. He reproduces a 1627 account of the whole affair in a rare Dutch booklet of 1630, and a genuine "Confession of Faith" handed down in manuscript, published here for the first time. But what happened to the brethren from Thessalonica? They appear on the horizon as "three brethren" only, and then vanish completely out of sight. We know of no Anabaptist Church in Thessalonica, either before or after their appearance. But at least we know now who the three brethren were, thanks to Dr. Friedmann's discoveries.

CHRISTIAN SECTARIANS IN THESSALONICA AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ANABAPTISTS

ROBERT FRIEDMANN

That in the sixteenth century Christian sectarians, apparently of the Anabaptist type, lived in Salonica (Turkey, also called Thessalonica) and that they had several contacts with brethren in Moravia and even in the Netherlands, is an old and well-established tradition among the Hutterites, the Swiss Brethren, and even among the Dutch Mennonites. But the very character and nature of these "Greek" brethren has never been studied, due perhaps to the paucity of material available and the remoteness of such a research. Now that Dr. Henry A. DeWind has presented us with the result of his most interesting research in the Archives of the Inquisition in Venice, Italy, this question seems somewhat nearer to solution. I do agree with Dr. DeWind that my first and rather vague conjecture[1] was not quite correct and that we have to distinguish between two totally different groups and events, both centering in Salonica at about the same time (1540-60). Both groups seem to have practiced adult baptism (hence were considered as Anabaptists) and both had contacts with Moravia, that is, with the Hutterites as well as with other Anabaptist groups settled in that area and collectively called "Swiss Brethren" (though not of Swiss origin). This strange coincidence easily led to an identification which, however, proved to be incorrect at closer scrutiny. On the basis of all the material available I now venture to present a more probable solution; but it is worth noting that a number of major questions still remain obscure and for the time being unanswerable.

The two Salonica groups under discussion then were the following ones: (A) Venetian refugees, mostly Socinians (i.e., anti-Trinitarians), who sought asylum in Turkey after 1551-52, when the persecution at home by the Inquisition made any peaceful existence impossible. A few of them later turned away from these doctrinal ties, and by strange contacts found their way to Moravia where they joined the Hutterite communities around 1560-61. (B) Greek Brethren, located all over the area of Macedonia (Salonica) and Thessaly (Larissa), an "old evangelical brotherhood" in Ludwig Keller's sense, apparently of very old standing, who likewise learned of the (Anabaptist) brethren in Moravia, and sent a delegation up there to seek contacts and an exchange of views and a strengthening

1 See *MQR* XXII (1948) 147, note 28.

of beliefs. That must have happened shortly before 1550 or thereabout. Whether the two groups (A) and (B) had any contacts among themselves, is not known but seems to be rather unlikely. Any final word, however, has to be postponed until further evidence.

(A) It was Joseph Beck, the editor of the *Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertaeufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn* (Vienna, 1883), who for the first time called attention to contacts of the Hutterites with people from Salonica. Reference to these he found in an old Hutterite manuscript of 1615[2] where a letter is copied which the Hutterite elder Claus Braidl had sent to a Swiss brother named Christian Raussenberger, in Switzerland, in 1601. The most important passage of this letter runs as follows:

About forty years ago, there was a people in Italy, around Venice, eager to serve God. Their teacher was one Franciscus von der Saag, who preached against idolatry and the godless doings [*add:* of the Catholic Church]. For that reason they were persecuted, and as they did not know where to turn to, a number of them finally decided to go across the sea towards Thessalonica. There they settled under a Turkish Pasha. But Franciscus remained in Italy. But when he heard of our church here in Moravia, where the brethren live together, and keep Christian community of goods, he started together with some other brethren from Italy and came to us. He looked around and inquired [*add:* about our way of living] and found out that this people here is standing upon the right apostolic ground. Thereupon he returned to Italy to visit his brethren there. After hearing these news they came with him to our church.

He also wrote from Italy to Thessalonica, and informed this people that he had found the right church which stands upon apostolic ground. They should come up confidentially and see for themselves. Thus several brethren from Thessalonica made themselves ready and came up to us and [*add:* in due time] became our brethren.[3]

No specific date is given but Beck correctly speculated that this event must have taken place around 1560-61, that is, forty years prior to

2 Now in the library of the Primate of Hungary, the Archbishop of Esztergom-Gran, old number GJX 33, Beck's code VI, folii 68-70; a copy of this passage is also in the Beck Collection in the Provincial Archive at Brno, Moravia, file 76, folii 109-110. A brief note on the Raussenberger letter of Claus Braidl, (1601) in which we learn about the Christians who came from Thessalonica. There was correspondence between some Swiss Brethren in Switzerland and the Hutterites in Moravia. Raussenberger was opposed to the principle of community of goods, and wrote in this vein: Don't you know that once brethren from Thessalonica came to Moravia, saw your brotherhood and did not approve of it? But then they came to people of our (Swiss) group, and experienced there the unity of the spirit? Thereupon Claus Braidl, the Bishop of the Hutterites, answered: You are writing of a history of two or three men, about forty years ago, who are supposed to have come from Thessalonica up to us here in Germany (Teutschland). And they came to us, but did not think that to keep community of goods was a necessary point of Christian faith. Then they were supposed to have come to you and to have liked your way of life. Of that we know nothing. But this we know: . . . (and here follows the text as given by Beck in his *Geschichtsbücher*). The *Epistel* to Raussenberger by Braidl, 1601, may be found in one manuscript codex in Esztergom, Hungary, and in several copies with the Hutterites in Canada who are very fond of the lengthy letter which is a great discussion between the ideas of the Hutterites and those of the other Anabaptists.

3 Beck, *Geschichts-Bücher*, etc., 1883, 211-212.

1601, the date of the letter. It is interesting that the Hutterite elders concluded their story with the words: "This is well known to us," thus indicating that the events were still alive in the memories in 1601.

From the research of Dr. DeWind, published below in this issue, we know now much more about the personalities involved. In fact, he makes this passage above much more intelligible and almost dramatic. Two men from the Venetian area, who formerly belonged to the anti-Trinitarian group (around Vicenza), Francesco della Saga and Guilio Gherlandi, went under the impact of heavy Inquisitorial persecution within the Republic of Venice directly to Moravia,[4] while a third one, Antonio Rizzetto, first took his refuge in Thessalonica together with a number of his anti-Trinitarian coreligionists. According to DeWind's research, this Rizzetto soon became disillusioned with Socinian doctrines, also received letters from Della Saga, and finally left Turkey to join his former Venetian brethren Francesco and Guilio in Moravia. This was, according to DeWind, in 1561, the date correctly assumed also by Beck. What still remains unanswered is the reference in the Hutterite letter to "several brethren" who were said to have come up from Salonica and to have subsequently joined the Hutterite Brotherhood. The *Geschichts-Bücher* does not give their names; that today we know a bit more about one of them, Rizzetto, is due mainly to the fact that one year later this brother fell into the hands of the Inquisition of Venice (having been on a mission trip in the neighborhood of Capodistria) and thus all material pertaining to him was deposited in the Archives of the Inquisition in Venice. The story which Dr. DeWind unfolds, is a rather pathetic one, dealing with one of the many, many seekers of that excited age of Reformation, filled with much human misery but likewise also with a courageous faith and a steadfast loyalty.

There is one more question which requires attention: how did these brethren travel, which route did they take, and how might they have found the Hutterite brethren (who did not speak Italian)? I owe some suggestions toward an answer of these questions to the kindness of Dr. DeWind. In a letter of January 1954, he had this to report:

Concerning the route taken by Rizzetto from Salonica to Moravia, I find the information not specifically stated. Comba's summary of one portion of Rizzetto's testimony says that he went from Salonica to "Bohemia." Later, however, during an interrogation by the Inquisitors in October

4 Cf. also H. A. DeWind, "Italian Hutterite Martyrs," *MQR* XXVIII (1954), 163-185.

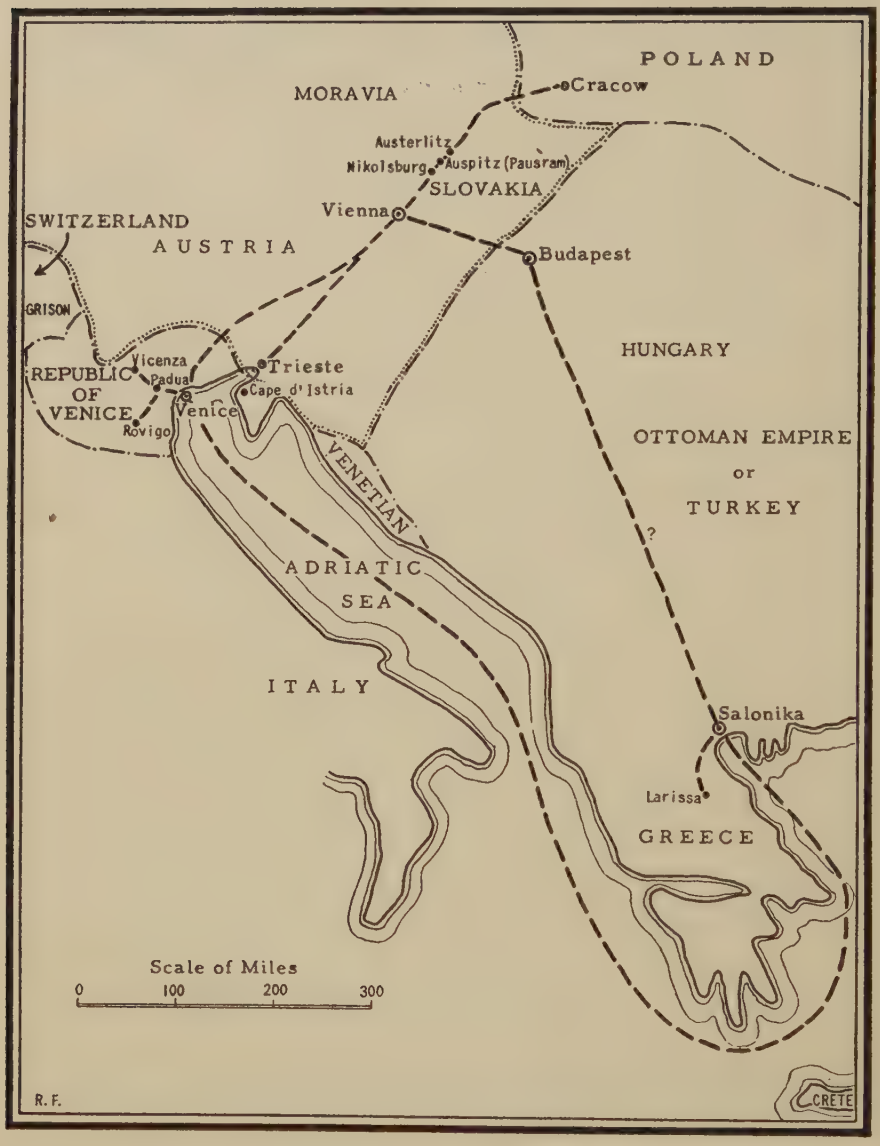
1562, which was shortly after his arrest with Della Saga, he described having gone to Moravia once before (one year earlier) in the company of a Ferrarese gentleman, a Vicentine lady, and one of his daughters. We may deduce that this trip was made from Venice. In a later interrogation in the same month, Rizzetto described how he had paid over some funds to a Venetian who in turn was to give it to a Jew who was to bring Rizzetto's wife and stepdaughter from Salonica to Venice. His wife might then decide for herself whether she wished to go to Moravia or not.[5]

From this report it may be concluded that these Venetian brethren did not use the land route via Budapest, dangerous due to wars on the Turkish border and to an undisciplined soldiery, but rather went by boat (galley?) to Venice, and thence on to Vienna and beyond. (The distance Salonica-Venice by sea is roughly 1,500 miles.) One may assume that a trip to Vienna and Moravia took between forty and fifty days. A map, showing all the main places, might well illustrate the geographic situation at that time [next page]. It also shows that the Austrian-Venetian border during the sixteenth century ran closely south of Trieste. That explains why the Inquisition could claim their victims caught in Capodistria, a few miles from the Austrian border. Austria itself, like all countries outside Italy and Spain, had no Inquisitorial courts.

As was said before, the Hutterites did not speak Italian, hence had no immediate contacts with that southern area. How did the Venetian brethren then find Moravia? There is a possible answer which sounds extremely simple: Moravia lay right on the route between Venice and Cracow, Poland, the new haven for the Socinians, then called The Little Polish Church. It is well to remember that Poland at that time (i.e., prior to the coming of the Counter Reformation) was one of the most tolerant countries of all of Europe, more tolerant even than Moravia and adjacent Slovakia. Dr. DeWind called my attention again to a passage in another document of the Venetian Inquisition, dated 1567, in which the person involved deposited the following story:

Then I went to Vienna, intending to go to Cracow in Poland, in the hopes of finding employment. A saintly bookseller, who was either a Venetian or a Paduan, and who had a bookshop in Vienna and one in

5 The text of Rizzetto's deposition with the Venetian Inquisition 1562, runs as follows: "*Rizzetto:* I deposited this money in the hands of the cap-maker in order that it might be given to a Jew called, if I am not deceived, Mose Monchario, whence he would conduct the two ladies named in the statement from Salonica to Venice.
Inquisitor: What was your relation to those women that you gave out money for them and that the affair should evolve in this manner?
Rizzetto: This Caterina was my wife, and Paola was her daughter by another husband. I ordered them to be taken away so that they could be sent to Moravia if they wished.
Inquisitor: You led them there?
Rizzetto: No, I did not take them because I did not yet know the way myself." Comba, *I nostri Protestanti,* Florence, 1897, 595. (transl. H. A. DeWind)


POLAND
MORAVIA
Cracow
Austerlitz
Nikolsburg
Auspitz (Pausram)
SLOVAKIA
Vienna
SWITZERLAND
AUSTRIA
Budapest
GRISON
HUNGARY
REPUBLIC OF VENICE
Vicenza
Padua
Trieste
Cape d'Istria
Venice
Rovigo
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
or
TURKEY
VENETIAN
ADRIATIC SEA
ITALY
Salonika
Larissa
GREECE
Scale of Miles
0 100 200 300
R. F.
CRETE

Cracow, told me that I should travel through Moravia; and since I knew that there were in Moravia some Anabaptists and numerous sects, and since I desired to speak with them and learn their opinions, I decided to go into Moravia.[6]

Vienna—Austerlitz—Cracow then were the relay stations of this long trek toward a place of peace on earth. The "saintly bookseller" in Vienna (an Italian) may be considered a significant middleman not only in this case but in many other similar cases as well. Actually we know all too little about the ways of the grapevine information, and we may assume that all these left-wing people of the age of Reformation knew quite a bit of each other, if not otherwise than by means of the moving stories of their numerous martyrs.

(B) Very different, indeed, is the situation with the other group of "Christians" from Salonica who likewise sought and found contacts with Moravian Anabaptists of all shades. While the first group represented Italian refugees in Turkey, the second group seem to have belonged to a genuine Greek nonconformist church, somehow tolerated by the Muslim Turks and apparently quite strong at the time of our story. We know of these people practically only through one single report which was first published in a Dutch book of 1630, entitled *Het Brilleken, Waer deur de Eens-gheloofs-doops-gesinde sien mogen, in wat gevoelen sy met den anderen stonden voor de eerste scheuringe* . . . door J.S. (Haerlem.H.P.v. Wesbusch, 1630).[7] Excerpts from it were published by T. Van Braght in his great *Martyrs' Mirror* of 1660,[8] thus making the story more widely known among the Mennonites. It is perhaps best to begin our discussion by reprinting this particular section of the *Martyrs' Mirror,* a selection from *The Spectacles* (or *Brilleken*), taken from the 1951 English edition with slight revisions.

Before we leave this, we would state that mention is made, in this century, not only of the Waldenses, but also of certain churches in Thessalonica, in Greece, which are declared to have remained unchanged in faith from the time of Christ, and to agree in faith and practice with the Anabaptistic churches in Switzerland. I will quote the account verbatim, which I have found in regard to this, in a certain tract entitled: *The Spectacles, by which the Anabaptists of one faith may see, etc., by a lover of the truth, J.S., printed at Harlem, by Hans Passchiers van Wesbusch,* A.D. 1630.

In the Preface, page 10, we read: "Since, my beloved, all the truly pious have a sincere joy and the greatest delight [to know], that many

6 See H. A. DeWind, page 45 of this issue.

7 A copy of this book is in the Library of the Vereenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente in Amsterdam, cf. *Catalogus,* 106.

8 *Martyrs' Mirror,* Dutch, edition of Dordrecht, 1660, II, pp. 4 & 5; second Dutch ed., Amsterdam, 1685, I, 400; German ed. at Pirmasens, 1780, I, 375-77; English ed. at Scottdale, Pa., 1951, 365-67.

pious people are found upon earth, it has seemed good to me, to acquaint you with a brief testimony that has fallen into my hands: How, in the year 1540, or a little before, certain persons were brought captive by the Turks, from Moravia, to Thessalonica, in Turkey, and sold as slaves; which slaves there became acquainted with the [Thessalonian] Christians. Observing their life and conversation, they said to these Thessalonians, that in Moravia there lived a people who were like them in life and conversation, and were called Anabaptists; which kindled in the Thessalonians a zeal to examine the truth of the matter; and it further happened, as the testimony states," etc.

On page 42 of the book referred to above, we read: *Brief account how through some Moravians who had been captured by the Turks and had come to Thessalonica, in Turkey, the Christians at Thessalonica obtained information that in Moravia there lived fellow believers of theirs, who were there called Anabaptists; and how, in order to ascertain the truth of the matter, they sent three of their brethren to Moravia, in Germany.*

"I, the undersigned, testify that in Moravia there lived with me, for the space of three years, a man of our brethren, about a hundred years old named Leonard Knar, who related to me that in his time, when he was a servant in the common house of the common church at Popitz, under the steward, Hans Fuhrman, three brethren of the church of Thessalonica were sent to Germany to inquire after their fellow-believers, who, as they had learned from the prisoners, as stated above, were living in Moravia.

"They first came to Nickolsburg, on the frontier of Hungary, where they went to a priest and inquired after this people. He entered a carriage and rode with these three men to Pausram, to those who are there called Hutterites, and in the Netherlands, Moravians.

"Having well examined their life and conversation, they discussed with them, in the Latin language, in which they were well versed, all the articles of the faith, but found that in three principal articles they did not accord; namely, first in *shunning,* as this article was maintained by the Hutterites; secondly, in the *community of goods,* which virtually consists with them more in dominion and servitude than in equality; thirdly, that they withhold from those who fall away from their communion and leave them the property which they brought in, on account of which these three men parted from them with tears in their eyes, because they had performed such a difficult and laborious journey in vain.

"The same priest then brought them in the same place (Pausram) to the Schweitzer church, who derive their name from Hans Schweitzer, who, through one of their brethren, named Hans Peck (who with Hans Fuhrman and twelve other persons, had lain in prison for nine years, in the castle Passau on the Danube, in Bavaria, for the testimony of the faith), discussed in Latin all the articles of their faith. They agreed well in all points, on account of which they being mutually filled with great joy, acknowledged each other as dear brethren, and in token thereof, commemorated together the Lord's Supper with great gladness, confessing themselves the true church of God. They stated further that the church of God at Thessalonica had remained unchanged in faith from the time of the apostles, and that they still preserved in good condition the letters which the apostle Paul wrote to them with his own hands.

"All this having taken place, they parted in peace, and having com-

mended each other with tears and the kiss of love, into the keeping of the Lord, the brethren journeyed back to Thessalonica.

"One of them who was a tailor by trade, left his shears as a memento in the church at Pausram.

"This history is not only known to me, but is generally known, not only in Moravia, but also in the upper Palatinate."

The father of this Leonard Knar, who saw and related all this, was elder among the Anabaptists there who now consist of two principal divisions, namely, the Hutterites, here in the Netherlands called Moravians, and the Schweitzers here in the Netherlands called Germans, but who were then yet one people. This Elder Leonard Knar ministered to these people in baptism, the Supper, and intercessions according to the doctrine of the apostles.

As Leonard was well acquainted with Hans Peck, the latter orally related to Leonard all that he had discussed with the brethren from Thessalonica.

We mentioned before, that Hans Fuhrman and Hans Peck, together with twelve other persons, lay imprisoned for nine years in the castle of Passau. From this long confinement they were released through bail furnished by a certain lord of Jamits [Jamnitz, Moravia] who traveled thirty-six leagues to release the prisoners by becoming bondsman for them. He had in his town Jamits, a large society of these people living under his protection.

To the above account the following testimony is given, subscribed to in these words:

"By me, Jacob Meyster, resident at Amsterdam, fled from Moravia, to Poland, A.D. 1620; thence A.D. 1626, to Stettin, in Pomerania, and in the year 1627, to Amsterdam. I acknowledge that this account of Leonard Knar is as related."

Characteristically Van Braght then adds another quotation of the same kind, to make his first report appear somewhat stronger. It is a reference from Jacob Mehrning's well-known *S. Baptismi Historia, das ist Heilige Tauff-Historia . . .* (Dortmund, 1646 and 1647), 739:

Thus we have information that even at the present day there are brethren and Christians at Thessalonica who agree with the Mennists in all articles of religion, also in baptism, two of whom were yet in the time of our fathers with the brethren in Moravia, and then also in the Netherlands, and communed with the brethren, who expressly declared that they still preserve in good conditions, at Thessalonica, the originals of St. Paul's two epistles to the Thessalonians. Likewise, that many of their brethren were still living, scattered here and there, in Ethiopia, Greece and other oriental countries, as well as other Christians, who like them were preserved by God, and remained in the same doctrine and true practice of baptism, constantly from the beginning of the apostles' to this time.[9]

The noteworthy new slant here is the remark that the Salonica Brethren, after having left Moravia, also visited the Mennonites

9 Jacob Mehrning, *S. Baptismi Historia* (Dortmund, 1646-47) 739 ff., according to *Martyrs' Mirror* (1951) 366.

or Doopsgezinde in the Netherlands. We do not know Mehrning's source,[10] but it is not unlikely that Mehrning, too, used the book *Het Brilleken* as his main reference.

To place this story in its proper context, it is necessary to decide its most likely date. One way to this end might be the following one: the story mentions among others the "Swiss" brother Hans Beck who talked with the Salonicans in the Latin language. Of this brother we know that he had lain in prison in Passau castle for nine years for the sake of his faith. According to C. Neff[11] that must have happened between 1535 and 1544; hence the visit must have taken place sometime after 1544 although we do not know exactly how soon after the brother's return. If we say around 1550, we might not fail all too much.

It is also worth noting that this visit must have been quite a stirring event; the source expressly states that "this history is not only known to me but is generally known, not only in Moravia but also in the Upper Palatinate," thus indicating existing ties between the otherwise little known "Swiss Brethren" in Moravia and those in the Palatinate. We should not forget that Austerlitz in Moravia and nearby places had been a real haven for all kinds of denominations and sectarian groups,[12] Hutterites, Swiss Brethren, anti-Trinitarians, Bohemian Brethren, Lutherans, etc., etc.

Our reference closes with a rather informative paragraph: "By me, Jacob Meyster, resident at Amsterdam, [who] fled from Moravia in 1620,[13] thence [went] to Stettin in Pomerania, and in 1627 [came] to Amsterdam." This "Swiss" brother Meyster, whose deposition we find published in *Het Brilleken,* 1630,[14] now refers to another Swiss brother, Leonhard Knar, of Popitz, Moravia,[15] aged one hundred or therebout, as his source. This Leonhard had told him the story of the Salonica Brethren, an event which must have taken place some seventy years before Meyster had left Moravia. That

10 In Dutch Mennonite historiography no mention is made of such a visit, maybe because it led to no further consequences. The only reference we know is the book *Het Brilleken.*

11 Chr. Neff, article "Hans Beck" in *Menn. Lex.,* I, 148 f.: "Beck, also Peckh [the hymn mentioned in the appendix even calls this brother Brätt] of Greding near Eichstätt, was caught and arrested together with his wife Elizabeth in Oberhaus near Passau. On Sept. 14, 1535, he was examined together with other prisoners, and he confessed that he was baptized by Blasius Kuhn of Bruchsal. Once before he had been imprisoned at Eggenburg, yet was freed again and burned through the cheeks, together with twenty other prisoners (Cf. R. Wolkan, *Lieder der Wiedertäufer,* Berlin, 1903, 30 f.). Apparently he is identical with John Beck of whom the *Martyrs' Mirror* mentions that he had been imprisoned in the castle dungeon of Passau together with Hans Fuhrmann and twelve more brethren for nine years. Through the Lord of Jamnitz, Moravia, who traveled 36 miles to ransom the prisoners, he was freed again. Later he settled down at Pausram, Moravia, etc., etc."

12 See note 6 *supra.*

13 The time of expulsion of all nonconformists from Moravia; the last Hutterites left in 1622.

14 Perhaps it was a letter to the author J.S.

15 Popitz, Moravia, southwest of Auspitz, the manorial estate of the Lords of Lomnitz. In 1537 Hutterite brethren began to build a Bruderhof at Popitz.

suggests that the report might not be perfectly accurate in all details. For instance, we hear in it of Christian brethren of Moravia who were brought to Thessalonica as Turkish prisoners of war around 1540 or earlier. Truly enough, the Turks had been before Vienna in 1529, and disturbed the frontier areas (Slovakia) all the while afterwards, but nothing is known of Turks in Moravia proper. And yet the report claims that it was in this way that the Greeks had heard for the first time of the brethren in Moravia. More investigation would be needed to clear up this point.[16]

Another point of uncertainty pertains to the term "Schweitzer Church," allegedly named after one brother Hans Schweitzer. Nothing is known about such a man and such a church, but we know that Anabaptists who did not live in community of goods like the Hutterites, were generally called *Schweitzer Brüder* or Swiss Brethren, even if they had very little contact with the original Swiss Brethren. There were some in Moravia as late as 1618.[17] Thus we must assume that the visitors, after having met the Hutterites in Pausram[18] whose organization was not to their liking, moved on to visit a different group of Anabaptists, called Swiss Brethren. In view of the reference to the Passau jail experience of Hans Beck, I would be even inclined to surmise some connections with the former Philippite Brethren of Moravia, the very beginners of the *Ausbund*-hymn collection. It was with this group in Popitz and Jamnitz, Moravia, that the Greeks felt a great deal of harmony and like-mindedness. Since the tradition of that visit lingered on among the Swiss Brethren in the Upper Palatinate—as Jacob Meyster testifies—we might not be too far from the truth in interpreting the "Schweitzer Church" in this way.

Jacob Meyster's report is dated 1627. Of the same year 1627 another document is extant which now must attract our attention. Of all the material presented it is the most remarkable and precious

16 There is another argument why this story of Moravian prisoners of war in Turkish hands has little probability. The Turks usually kept these people in close quarters, as forced laborers or as household slaves in noble Turkish homes. Compare for this entire situation in Turkish lands the exciting story of one brother Salomon Böger, 1607-10, in R. Friedmann, "Adventure of an Anabaptist in Turkey," in *MQR* (1943) 73-86.

17 To this question of "Swiss Brethren" in Moravia compare J. Beck, *Geschichts-Bücher*, etc., 1883, 152, note: "This name was applied to the group of brethren around Nikolsburg after the departure and martyrdom of Hubmaier (1528). Some of these brethren settled down in Jamnitz, Moravia (where Oswald Glaidt was their leader for a time), and in other manorial villages of Southern Moravia. The persecution of 1535 almost exterminated these brethren, but after a few years they were strengthened again by newcomers from Germany. Since 1543 they merged with the Hutterites. Nevertheless, it is known that one 'Swiss' group existed in Znaim, Moravia, as late as 1591, and a small group of 'Swiss Brethren' was known in Eibenschütz, Moravia (the very asylum for all groups and shades of beliefs), as late as 1618, the year when the Thirty Years' War broke out." The Lord of Jamnitz was mentioned in note 11 as a particular patron of the Swiss Brethren.

18 Pausram, Moravia, a village near Auspitz (like Popitz, note 15). In 1538 it belonged to the Lords of Liechtenstein. In this year Hutterite brethren began to establish a Bruderhof there.

one. This "Document" (as we will call it for the moment) has never been published before, yet seems to represent a living tradition among Mennonites (Swiss Brethren). It supplements the above story in a most welcome way and provides us at the same time with information completely unknown otherwise. We present this remarkable document here for the first time, in an English translation (by Elizabeth Bender); the original is deposited in the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, and consists of seven small sheets of paper. Origin and derivation of this document are indicated at the end of the text; its authenticity, however, is strongly suggested by the identity of certain statements (in the last section of the document) with informations in *Het Brilleken*. We shall present the text of this document first, and add the necessary discussion afterwards.

A Confession of Faith of the "Anabaptists" in Greece.

The three Christians from Thessalonica who came to Germany confessed the foundations of their faith as follows:

I

Concerning God the Father we believe and confess that He is the eternal Father from all eternity; concerning His Son we believe and confess according to all the writings of the prophets and apostles that He was conceived through the Word of the Father, and was born into the world by Mary. We understand that because Mary was of the earth, she unfortunately returned to the earth, and we confess here with John that the Word was made flesh. Since His body was conceived through the Word of the Father, He did not return to earth like other sinners but arose from the earth and ascended to Heaven from whence He came, and He did not see the decay of His flesh.

(addenda:) We confess that Christ died, was buried and arose on the third day, and ascended to Heaven, and that He will return on the Last Day to hold judgment over the living and the dead.

II

Concerning the resurrection of the dead we believe and confess that all men shall arise with their body and their soul, the God-fearing in order to return to eternal life, and the ungodly to eternal death.

III

Concerning baptism we believe and confess a baptism upon confession of faith and not an infant baptism, and we understand that a baptismal candidate must be standing with his feet in water like Christ was standing in the river Jordan. Thus he is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

IV

Concerning the death of children we believe and confess that those children who die in their innocence we consider saved, especially those of believing parents.

V

Concerning the Lord's Supper we believe and confess a Lord's Supper to be held with ordinary bread and wine as a memorial of the bitter suffering and death of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

VI

Concerning footwashing we believe and confess that a footwashing is customary among us as an ordinance of the Lord.

VII

Concerning marriage we believe and confess a marriage of two believing persons, but we decline outside marriage upon penalty of the ban. The banned person may never again return into the brotherhood unless he either brings with him the outside member or forsakes him or her.

VIII

Concerning the ban we believe and confess that it should be used in case that someone goes astray either in error and false beliefs or in the sins of the flesh. He is then placed before the people and his transgressions are held before his eyes. If he or she then desists from them, this person is not banned, yet is excluded for a time from all spiritual activities. In the meanwhile the fruits of their repentance are being watched. After a certain time such persons are again placed before the congregation, and if there anyone is found small or big, who is not satisfied with their repentance, the sinner must remain outside of spiritual activities for another period, until all brethren and sisters will be satisfied with his conduct. Then he or she is permitted again to share in all activities. But if the sinner should not desist when placed before the congregation, he or she is then cut off or separated from the church and will be shunned in life and trade. One does not eat and drink with him nor will one receive him into our houses nor greet him on the street.

IX

Concerning marital avoidance we believe and confess it in this manner: if two believing persons are in the state of marriage and one backslides, and the backslidden member desires to live with the believing member, we do not command marital avoidance but consider it most suitable for the believing part to live with the backslider; but we admonish him or her to repentance by way of a pure conduct. But if it happens that the backslider lives such a perverted life that the believing member cannot live any longer according to his faith with the unbelieving one, then we consider it wise for the believer to withdraw from the unbeliever. On the other hand, if the backslidden member, who lives in such perversion, does not want to live with the believer, then the believer is not bound to follow in such guilt.

X

Concerning the oath we believe and confess that a Christian should not swear any oath above yea or nay even if he has the truth, but he should rather die.

XI

Concerning the bearing of the sword we believe and confess that a Christian should in no wise offer resistance with weapons nor carry a sword.

XII

Concerning walk and conduct of life we believe and confess that no Christian is permitted in any trade to cheat his neighbor or offend him. We take seriously the fifth and sixth chapters of Matthew and seek to follow them in life.

XIII

Concerning freedom of will, we believe and confess that God gives all men such gifts in their free will that they may turn either to the good or to the evil as they choose.

XIV

Concerning patriarchs we believe and confess: patriarchs, bishops or deacons are not able to achieve anything unless ordained and called by the church or by someone from above. Concerning buying and trading: the patriarchs, bishops and preachers shall not carry on any trade but shall work with their hands. If they cannot earn enough then the brethren should supply their additional needs.

Concerning [church-] government we confess that Christians do not recognize government among themselves, for Christ alone is their government and king.

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This is then the Confession of the three Greeks or Christians from Thessalonica.

One of these Greeks lives in the town of Larissa [in Thessaly]; he said that perhaps two thousand brethren are living in that town, and that there is hardly any village in Greece which does not have some such brethren. He also said that their church has never been so corrupt as not to have brethren or elders who take care of the ordination of the ministry. [possible other version: who were confirmed in the ministry.]

He also said that they still have epistles which the apostles wrote with their own hands; they have the letter to the Corinthians [text corrupt, possible reading: five copies of said book] and the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and also the Revelation of John. He said that they are written in very large letters in Greek script, as large as a section of a finger, and at the end of the Book of Revelation, they have two more rules than we. They stand down at the bottom [of the page] and read as follows: "Cursed be the man who places his confidence upon unleavened bread." He said, "we could not understand what the apostle meant with these words, but when I came through this country here [Moravia], then I found out what the apostle meant, for I met a people that puts its hope in the feast of unleavened bread." [*Note:* the text is rather corrupt at this place, and "feast of unleavened bread" is but a conjecture. Does he mean the Jews? It is known that there were many Jews also in Salonica.]

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This letter was composed in 1627 or about that time, and was recopied in 1743, on the 24th of April, by Jacob Schantz; and again in 1805, on October 25, by Abraham Stauffer, on August 22, 1814, by Johannes Bär, and in December 1829, by Johannes Konrad. In April 1905, Otto Lichti copied it in Bloomfield, New Jersey, and copied it again for me, N. B. Grubb [around 1920?].

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The "Document" was written in 1627, and one may wonder whether Jacob Meyster, our witness in *Het Brilleken,* might not have been instrumental also in handing down this document, bringing it from Moravia to Amsterdam (unless another copy had already existed in the Palatinate prior to 1627). Since the tradition of that unusual "encounter" was so much alive seventy or more years after the event itself, it is not surprising to find the document being copied and recopied up to our own times. It gave Mennonite brethren so-to-speak a good feeling that they are not the only ones who are pursuing this "primitive Christian way." Rather, a world-wide fellowship exists of like-minded brethren, known and unknown, who all hold more or less the same tenets.

But who were these remarkable "Greek Brethren" who did not spare the considerable troubles of undertaking such a big trip to "Europe," even though strictly speaking it resulted in nothing tangible and led to no further consequences? This is a question pertaining to general Church History. Unfortunately, any attempt on our part to clarify this question failed completely. The only thing known for sure is that these brethren were not descendants of the Bogomiles (who had been Slavic Christians and not Greek ones). To the Western scholar very little is known about sectarian movements in the Balkans after the Turkish conquest. But there these sectarians are nevertheless; and one is reminded of Ludwig Keller's well-known thesis of a continuity of "old evangelical brotherhoods" from the primitive church of the apostles onward through the ages to the present, a thesis often ridiculed and yet with a core of truth. Our document refers to such a brotherhood which has become known by mere chance. That the "Document" (as well as Meyster's report) is genuine, seems to be confirmed beyond doubt. Hence the particular value of its information. Of special interest in it is also the claim of the Greek Brethren that they still possess manuscripts of parts of the New Testament, supposedly written by the Apostle Paul, but more likely deriving from early centuries A.D. The characterization of the script as Greek letters, "as large as a section of a finger" (*uncials*), sounds more than reliable. Many old New Testament codices written in this way have been preserved.

This "Confession" should of course not be understood as an official document of the Greek Brethren. We may rather assume that the Swiss Brethren inquired of their guests point by point what their beliefs were, according to a series of questions significant to the Swiss Brethren themselves. The Greeks then answered as best

they could (in Latin, to be sure), and thus the Document came into being. It is surprising how close this "Confession" comes to the beliefs of all (or most) Anabaptists, how a pattern of primitive Christianity shines out, and how far a general consensus was reached between all those who took the idea of such a primitive Christianity really seriously.

Here ends our material. But I do not wish to close without inviting co-operation in the furtherance of this research. Some light has been caught to make the past more intelligible and contemporaneous. Can we still further increase our knowledge and understanding of Christian brotherhoods and their life?

Appendix

An Ausbund Hymn on the Thessalonian Story

The appendix to the *Ausbund,* the historic hymnal of the Swiss Brethren, contains a hymn which is a versification of the *Martyrs' Mirror* story told above, almost to the word. It begins, *Oh Herr, thue auf die Lefzen mein,* has 36 stanzas, and is found in all *Ausbund* editions beginning with the 1785 Germantown edition (in all recent edd., pp. 892-95). The title of this hymn reads as follows, *Ein schönes neues geistliches Lied, aus einer Historie gezogen von denen drei Christen wo aus Thessalonicha in die Pfalz gekommen sind. Dieses Lied ist gemacht worden Anno Domini 1540.* It was printed, possibly for the first time, in a small hymn pamphlet together with four other hymns under the title, *Fünf schöne geistliche Lieder . . . gedruckt im Jahr 1695* (n.p. 16 pp.), where it appears as No. 4 but without the above title. The hymn must have been composed sometime before 1695, when no German translation of the *Martyrs' Mirror* was yet available. Did the author copy from the Dutch *Martyrs' Mirror* of either 1660 or 1685? The fact that a German *Glaubensbekenntnis* of the Greek Brethren was in possession of the Palatinate Mennonites leaves the possibility open that a German text of the Meyster report may have been available in the Palatinate, independent of either *Het Brilleken* of 1630 or the *Martyrs' Mirror.*

In a 17th century copy of the *Ausbund* in the Mennonite Historical Library of Goshen College this hymn pamphlet is bound with (or printed with) the rest of the book, with separate title page but having the same format and typeface. The first European edition of the *Kleines Handbüchlein, darinnen Morgen- und Abendgebeter enthalten sind* (n.p., 1786) also contains these five hymns, this time with the same title which is also found, for the first time, in the American *Ausbund* of one year earlier.

There are a number of serious misstatements both in title and contents of the hymn. Since the title is in no way original (having been added almost a century after the 1695 printing of the hymn) we will concentrate on the contents of the hymn only. Stanza 2: "Drei Christen wurden ausgesandt/ von Thessalonich here/ die kommen sind in Ungarnland (meant is Moravia)/ in Ober-Pfalz gar färe"; stanza 28: "Diese Geschicht war nicht gering/ sondern bekannt den Gemeinen/ der Oberpfalz und Mähren/ auch, da sind sie durchgereist." As far as we know

from *Het Brilleken,* our only source, these Christians from Salonica never came either to the Oberpfalz (in Bavaria between Hof and Regensburg) or to the Rhenish Palatinate, but the *Martyrs' Mirror* report mentions that it was well known in the Palatinate that such a visit (with Swiss brethren in Moravia) had taken place. This remark was then distorted and a false claim produced. Also the purported date of composition, 1540, is grossly incorrect, since not even the visit came in that year. Again a casual remark in the story was misinterpreted and thus a misleading tradition was created. There are a few more mistakes: the brother Hans Beck or Peck is here called Hans Brätt. In stanza 5 the Hutterites (of whom the Greek Brethren did not approve) are called "Lutherans" (*Lutherische*). Stanza 27 mentions that the brethren from Thessalonicha left their scissors with the "Gemein zu Passaw," which again is incorrect since they never were in Passau. The fact that the hymn contains no new information confirms its derivative character. It is remarkable that one brother (we might assume of Palatinate Mennonite origin) felt urged to compose such a hymn out of the story thus giving it a place in Mennonite tradition quite out of proportion to the real significance of that visit.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND RESEARCH NOTES

ANABAPTISTS IN THESSALONICA?

HENRY A. DEWIND

Robert Friedmann, in a provocative footnote to an article in the MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW,[1] has raised the question of the proper identification of certain brethren, "mentioned in many places in Anabaptist records," who found a refuge in Thessalonica within the Turkish dominion in the mid-sixteenth century. He cites a passage in Van Braght's *Martyrs' Mirror*[2] as one such mention, but suggests that Van Braght's date of 1540 may be in error. He goes on to suggest that the group in Thessalonica were not, properly speaking, Anabaptists at all but Italian anti-Trinitarians who around 1550 were forced to flee to any available refuge due to an intensive persecution by the Inquisition in Venice. He bases this suggestion on a passage in the *Geschichts-Bücher* of the Hutterites, which, however, indicates a closer connection between the Moravian *Täufer* and the Italian refugees than Friedmann admits. According to this passage, dated 1560, the brethren in Thessalonica appear as associates of Francesco della Sega, an Italian, who was accepted to full membership by the Hutterite community and whose orthodoxy on the Trinity is unquestioned.[3]

Now there are two problems here which require disentangling: First, does Van Braght's citation refer to the same people in Thessalonica as does the passage in the Hutterite *Geschichts-Bücher*? Second, were the Italian refugees, whom Friedmann calls anti-Trinitarians, really *not* Anabaptists, or was there perhaps some special connection between them and the Hutterites? My conclusion on the first problem is that the references are to two distinct groups of people, and it is therefore unnecessary to attempt to reconcile the dates 1540 and 1550 by assuming an error. On the second point the evidence is that some Italians fled from Venice to Thessalonica and that some of these people were anti-Trinitarians while others were not. At least one of those who were not anti-Trinitarians later joined the Hutterites in Moravia.

Fortunately the Venetian records of the Inquisition contain information that sheds a good bit of light on this question and helps to explain the confusion that has surrounded the relationship of Italians in Thessalonica to Anabaptism.[4] According to these records the Inquisition learned late in 1551 of the threatening growth in Venetia of a sect called "Anabaptist" by its members because of its practice of believers' baptism but chiefly conspicuous for its anti-Trinitarian teachings.[5]

1 "The Encounter of Anabaptists and Mennonites with Anti-Trinitarianism," *MQR*, XXII (1948), 147, n. 28.

2 T. Van Braght, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 1685, II, 415; cf. English edition, 1951, 365-69. This passage quotes, from a tract of 1630 by "J.S." called *Het Brilleken* (*The Spectacles*), an account of a visit made some time after 1540 by a delegation of Thessalonian brethren to Pausram near Nikolsburg in the hope of making contact with a group of fellow believers there of whom the Greeks had been informed by some Moravians who had been captured by the Turks and sold as slaves in Thessalonica around 1540.

3 J. v. Beck (ed.), *Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn* etc., *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, XLIII (Vienna, 1883), 211.

4 I have shown elsewhere that the origins of Italian so-called "Anabaptism" probably lie in the anti-Trinitarian teachings current in the Raetian Leagues in the 1540's; cf. " 'Anabaptism' and Italy," *Church History*, XXI (1952), 20-38. V. Bellondi pleads for an indigenous origin of Italian "Anabaptism" but without considering the Raetian Leagues, *Documenti e Anedotti di Storia Veneziana (810-1854)* (Florence, 1902), 77.

5 DeWind, *op. cit.*, 30.

Inquisitorial action against adherents of the sect led to recantations by several individuals and to flight from Italy by others. Some of the latter are to be found in Turkey as early as April, 1552.[6] At least the Venetian Archives contain a letter dated April 18 of that year addressed to the lace-maker Giacometto,[7] minister of the sect at Padua, written by one Giulio da Alessandria from "Castelnuovo" (not otherwise identified) in Turkey, where he and some other brethren had found refuge.[8] The letter indicates that Giulio had been preceded by others of the brethren. Giulio says that he will attempt to persuade the brethren who are with him, as well as those who will later join him, to move on to Thessalonica where they might expect opportunities for their crafts, since Thessalonica is a busy city. Since Giulio makes no mention of a community of his brethren already in Thessalonica and since his tone implies that he is suggesting a not previously considered possibility, it would appear that he was not in contact with the Thessalonian Christians cited by Van Braght, but there is no proof for this. Giulio's letter carries two additions: the one is a note from Bartolomeo of Padua sending greetings and requesting that his sister, an accepted member of the anti-Trinitarian Paduan community, should be permitted to accompany the next fugitives who leave for Turkey; the other contains a greeting from Nicolo of Padua to which is attached the observation that he does not intend to travel further for the time being. That this letter is to be found in the Inquisitorial Archives provides tragic evidence that the authorities were moving swiftly in their endeavors to destroy all vestiges of the radical sect within Venetian territory.

Socinian tradition, untrustworthy as it however is, assigns the flight to Thessalonica to the time following the disclosure of the Venetian radical movement and limits the fugitives to Italians from Venetia.[9]

We next hear of these Italian fugitives in the testimony of one Antonio Rizzetto of Vicenza.[10] This man accompanied the above-mentioned Francesco della Sega on a missionary venture to Italy from Moravia on behalf of the Hutterite Brethren. The two men and a number of companions were arrested at Capodistria near Trieste late in August, 1562.[11] After preliminary hearings before the principal magis-

6 We need not be surprised to find Christian Italians looking for and finding asylum in Moslem Turkey. Intercourse between Venice's merchant interests and the former possessions of the Byzantine Empire continued after Constantinople's fall to the Ottomans in 1453. Other trading peoples besides Italians found at least temporary habitations in Turkish port cities, witnesses the Flemings mentioned by Caterina Rizzetto in her letter of June, 1563, cited below. For a stimulating discussion of relations between Ottoman Turkey and Christendom in the years around 1500, see M. P. Gilmore, *The World of Humanism* (New York, 1952), 6-21.

7 This man is also mentioned as having rebaptized a number of persons in Vicenza. See the testimony of Pietro Manelfi, ertswhile missionary of the anti-Trinitarian "Anabaptists," who evidently regarded Giacometto as one of the anti-Trinitarians. This testimony is contained in his fourth deposition, made to the Inquisition at Rome on Nov. 14, 1551, printed with his three earlier depositions by E. Comba, "Un sinodo anabattista a Venezia anno 1550," *Rivista Cristiana,* XIII (1885), 21-24, 83-87.

8 K. Benrath, *Geschichte der Reformation in Venedig,* No. 18 of *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte* (Halle, 1887), 85; E. Comba, *I nostri protestanti,* Vol. II, *Durante la riforma nel Veneto e nell'Istria* (Firenze, 1897), 514-15. Benrath and Comba summarize the letter, Comba the more completely.

9 E.g., C. Cantu, *Gli eretici d'Italia* (Torino, 1866), III, 167, n. 41: "Lubienecius, nella Hist. reform. polonicae, 1685, riferisce che nel 1546 si teneano congreghe a Vicenza: che un abate Bucalo fuggì di colà a Tessalonica con quaranta compagni: Giulio Trevisano [Gherlandi], Francesco da Ruego [della Sega], Jacobo da Chiari furono presi; quest'ultimo morì, gli altri furono strangolati a Venezia. L'abate morì a Damasco, e i suoi come pagni si sparsero nell' Elvezia, in Moravia ecc." But see E. M. Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and its Antecedents* (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 81-83, for a convincing demonstration of the synthetic character of the tradition and its flagrant violation of historically accurate dating.

10 Comba, *Protestanti,* 589-602. H. A. DeWind in *MQR* (1954) 182-85.

11 *Ibid.,* 540. Capodistria was Venetian territory, while nearby Trieste was Austrian.

trate at Capodistria their interrogations were conducted more thoroughly at Venice beginning in October. During the course of the questioning Rizzetto revealed that he had adopted the evangelic faith around ten years earlier (probably before 1552) and, together with his wife but not with his children, had been baptized in his house in the Vicentine district by one Marc'Antonio of Asolo.[12] When the Inquisitorial persecution made conditions precarious for the sectarians (Rizzetto does not give the date but it was probably late in 1551 or early in 1552), Rizzetto and his children, his wife having just died, left for Thessalonica with a certain Bartolomeo of Padua. The latter had with him his wife Caterina and his daughter Paola.[13] Bartolomeo died in Thessalonica and Rizzetto married the widow Caterina and adopted Paola. Caterina professed the same religion that Rizzetto did, having already been rebaptized, presumably back in Italy.[14] After an undetermined length of time Rizzetto left Thessalonica, not having found that place satisfactory. The Italian records do not say why he left. Was it simply because he could not find employment of a suitable kind there? Or was it for religious reasons; that is, did he find mere freedom from persecution an inadequate reason for staying with his fellow refugees? Or was it for the reasons given in the passage from the *Geschichts-Bücher* already cited (above, n. 3): i.e., had Rizzetto read a letter sent to Thessalonica by Francesco della Sega which told of the Moravian community? I suspect that we can see here an external manifestation of Rizzetto's growing awareness of the chasm between anti-Trinitarianism on the one side and his own inclination toward Trinitarian orthodoxy on the other. This view receives support from the negative answer he gave to the Inquisition when he was asked if Thessalonica contained a congregation of his sect.[15] This answer, given in 1562, if a true statement of Rizzetto's opinion, might be taken to mean one of various things. It might, for example, mean that the Italians in Thessalonica were too few to constitute a congregation; or it might mean that Rizzetto now interpreted the question to refer to his Anabaptist beliefs, as amplified and limited by his Moravian experiences. If this were so, he would rightly count the anti-Trinitarians of Thessalonica as not of *his* sect.

Upon leaving Thessalonica, Rizzetto, with his own children but without Caterina and Paola, returned to Italy. He traveled to Moravia in 1561 and, much impressed with the life of the Hutterites, determined to settle in their community.[16] Then in 1562 he accompanied Francesco della Sega on the ill-fated trip to Italy. At the time of his arrest Rizzetto was attempting to make arrangements for bringing Caterina and Paola from Thessalonica to Venice and thence to Moravia, if that should be his wife's desire.[17]

Included with the documents dealing with Rizzetto's case is a letter, dated June 8, 1563, from Caterina in Thessalonica to her son-

12 *Ibid.*, 596. This Marc'Antonio was a companion of Pietro Manelfi, the renegade anti-Trinitarian. The latter may even have been present at Rizzetto's baptism, since it is known that they went to Vicenza together on at least one occasion, cf. Manelfi's second deposition, Rome, Nov. 12, 1551, Comba, "Un sinodo anabattista." It seems clear to me that Rizzetto joined the sect while it was coming under the domination of the anti-Trinitarians and went over to the more orthodox position accepted by the Hutterites at some later date.

13 It is conceivable that this was the same Bartolomeo of Padua whose note was appended to the letter of Giulio da Allessandria of April 18, 1552, cited above. Such an identification would place Rizzetto's trip to Thessalonica in 1552. At least it would bring him as far as Castelnuovo by April of that year. However, this is conjecture.

14 Comba, *Protestanti*, 597-98.

15 *Ibid.*, 598.

16 Interrogation of October, 1562, *ibid.*, 595.

17 *Ibid.*, 597.

in-law Bartolomeo in Padua.[18] From its presence here we may assume that either the bearer of the letter or its recipient had also been apprehended by the Inquisition. In this letter Caterina expresses her concern that Bartolomeo has not written to her and then tells him that she has lost her daughter Paola by death. She now implores him to come and take her home with him. Caterina tells her son-in-law that she has found friends among some Flemings who have been very kind to her in her adversity and have even paid for the costs of Paola's funeral. In a postscript addressed to Bartolomeo's wife, her daughter Lucia (I have no further information about her), Caterina says that Paola has been buried near her father, who, we recall, had died shortly after their arrival in Thessalonica, and "the others." She concludes, "The pestilence is great in Salonika. God do with me what he pleases." I find it peculiar that this letter makes no reference to her husband, Antonio Rizzetto, who had by June of 1563 already spent some ten months in captivity. That Caterina turned to her son-in-law for aid in getting back to Italy might mean that she was aware of Antonio's imprisonment and realized that he could no longer help her, or it might mean that she had given him up as faithless and was looking to the husband of her daughter by her first marriage for help. The former of these assumptions strikes me as the more acceptable, but it must be admitted that we are dealing here with extremely uncertain matters.

If we now are to piece together the evidence gathered from these Venetian documents, what are we to conclude about the community of Italian Anabaptists in Thessalonica? I think that the answer will be found if we remind ourselves of the fluid and dynamic character of the Venetian movement in its doctrinal outlook. Already at the time when the various congregations of the sect met together in a council at Venice in 1550, there were individuals and even one entire congregation, that of Cittadella,[19] which refused to accept the anti-Trinitarian dogmas adopted as the official creed of the congregations represented at the council. As time passed other individuals doubtlessly also had misgivings on these matters, and we must place Giulio Gherlandi, Francesco della Sega, and Antonio Rizzetto in this group. The fugitives in Thessalonica represented probably from the very beginning both moderate and extreme doctrinal tendencies, and the years following 1551 doubtlessly saw such men as Rizzetto gradually realizing where their most fundamental beliefs lay. The moderates were probably in a minority in Thessalonica; at least this would account for Rizzetto's dissatisfaction with the situation there and for his eventual move to Moravia, when he learned of the teachings of the Hutterites. This view allows for the independent origin of the believers' baptism of the Italian sectarians and still explains credibly the enthusiasm with which the moderates among the Italians embraced the way of life of the Hutterites once they had personally experienced it.

18 Printed in Comba., 592-94; also in V. Bellondi, *I battisti, pagine della Inquisizione veneta* (Rome, 1881), a work to which I have not had access; condensed by Benrath, *Reformation in Venedig*, 85.

19 Deposition of Manelfi at Bologna, Oct. 17, 1551, Comba, "Un sinodo anabattista."

The Reply of the Lancaster Conference to the John H. Oberholtzer Constitution of 1847

Henry Nice (March 18, 1804-Oct. 9, 1883) was the father-in-law of the late Mennonite deacon Henry C. Krupp of Souderton, Pa. (April 17, 1848-June 19, 1929). He was a Franconia schoolteacher-farmer who, when Franconia Township about 1851 adopted the State School law of 1834 and 1836, called a public meeting of the Mennonite membership, which dropped the Christian Day School movement for almost a century in this Conference. However, about 1872 he opened a German school in the schoolhouse adjoining the Franconia Meetinghouse Saturday afternoons during the five months between the school terms. Here he taught German hymns, the German New Testament, ABC and German Question Books. The school became so large that it was moved into the meetinghouse and continued until about 1877, when the Sunday school replaced it. Nice was ordained to the ministry June 15, 1838 (J. C. Wenger, *Franconia Mennonite History*, Telford, 1938, 145-47).

About 1847 when the John H. Oberholtzer schism occurred in the Franconia Conference to form the East Pennsylvania Conference (later Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonite Church), when sixteen ordained members including the moderator of Conference (John Hunsicker) withdrew, Henry Nice found himself with others locked out of the West Swamp Church (Wenger, 126). When the Oberholtzer faction had drawn up a Conference constitution, the majority of Conference, satisfied with the Sermon on the Mount and the Dortrecht Confession, protested, and sent a copy of the proposed constitution to the Lancaster Conference for its reaction (Wenger, 355). The Lancaster reply, as found in the Archives of the Mennonite Church, John F. Funk collection, is the document published herewith. It was used in the Bucks County Court litigation proceedings (Dec. 15, 1848) concerning the Deep Run Meetinghouse grounds (Wenger, 363).

The Lancaster reply was apparently written, and signed first, by Bishop Christian Herr of Pequea (Oct. 31, 1780-June 23, 1853), then by five others. Jacob Hostetter (Aug. 23, 1774-April 6, 1865), who lived east of Manheim, was the bishop of the Jacob N. Brubacher district and moderator of the conference since 1843. Christian Bomberger (Sept. 18, 1786-Feb. 4, 1871), one of the first bishops in the Hammer Creek District, but in 1847 only a preacher, lived after 1860 in Cumberland County. Henry Shenk (Oct. 2, 1794-Oct. 22, 1865), a grandson of Michael Shenk of Strasburg and father of committeeman John Shenk, lived on the Marietta Pike, and was bishop of the Manor-Byerland District. Ordained as bishop in 1843, he was in 1847 already an active leader in a strong district. Martin Mayer (April 3, 1798-Oct. 4, 1873), who owned 570 acres of land north of Lancaster in the Quarry Line area, was a minister at the Reading Road (now Landis Valley) meetinghouse since 1832. He was the father-in-law of preacher Adam Breneman, his successor. These four bishops and two preachers signed for the Lancaster Conference.

IRA D. LANDIS

West Lampeter Township, Lancaster Co., Pa., Aug. 29, 1847

Dearly beloved Brother Henry Neiss:

Foremost, we wish that the good and merciful God through Christ Jesus and His Holy Spirit, ours and yours also, may mightily enlighten hearts and souls with the true Gospel light, that we through it may rightly discern in these dark times what contributes to the reviving and

edifying and growth of the nonresistant Mennonite church. It is so necessary that we together turn our hearts to Jesus and ask Him for His help and support. Beloved brother, since through your letter and your visit with us, [we have] our understanding about the new articles which are so strongly changed, and since we ourselves have read these new articles in a printed booklet, we have felt pressed to write to you our idea and understanding concerning several points.

First, it is well known to us that you do not conduct your meeting [conference] exactly like ours, but basically it is the same. But the new plan, whereby a chairman shall be elected, as well as a secretary who shall record all the decisions or regulations in a book, would be imitating the worldly societies exactly. Therefore we can and would not accept such, for we believe the gospel is record enough to keep the conference and the church in order, if it is followed [*belebet*].

Second, the new regulation governing the selection of the ministers is just exactly contrary to our and our forefathers' procedure, and a dangerous invasion of the right of the church, according to our judgment. For if one member through the leading of the Lord, as he believes, would vote for a brother, but not being one of the two highest, such a member would then have to consider his vote and leading as null and void, and the Lord would also be blocked thereby. The apostles and the church, it is true appointed only two, but we do not read that more than two were included in the voting; therefore we cannot accept this point or regulation, for we do not want to consider ourselves more clever than the older ones.

Thirdly, as to the supporting of the ministers, if they were poor in earthly treasures or are still such, there is a rule among the nonresistant church, so old that it reaches to the apostolic age. But the support came out of love and sympathy, if such ministers were worthy. But as soon as the conference writes this principle into a church book, it becomes a law, and the road is prepared for pay, to preach for money, which led the early church of Christ to apostasy [*Verfall*], and we believe firmly that it will lead us also to apostasy, because through it the foundation is laid that many would refuse to preach without pay. Therefore we want to have nothing to do with such a matter.

Fourth, concerning prayer for the authorities, this is right and good, and is also commanded. But to make a law, and even to write it in a church book by the conference, that the church shall have freedom to call upon the government to protect their temporal possessions is something different. For there would soon be litigation and lawsuits enough before the worldly courts, which would be basically wholly contrary to the teaching, life, and walk of our Lord Jesus and His apostles. Therefore we want to have no part in the making of such regulations.

Fifth, as to the new regulation or point to have our ministers marry members with such who stand outside of our church and faith and confession, and not to set these members back from the council of the brotherhood and communion, [this] would wholly upset and reject the old Christian order of the nonresistant church which goes back to the time of the martyrs. Therefore we want to have nothing remotely to do with it, but remain by the order of our forefathers.

Sixth, concerning those persons who were baptized according to a different manner, and ask to unite to our church or faith, if they declare only that they are satisfied with their baptism (even if it happened in childhood), to accept to our church such persons baptized as children,

without baptism on the true faith, would at once destroy in its root our old evangelical faith and confession which is sealed with thousands of blood-witnesses, for this would give an open door to infant baptism. Wherefore we do not want any part in it. But persons of other denominations who received baptism in older or adult years on the true faith in Jesus and His holy Word, if they are satisfied with their baptism and want to accept our church, we do not baptize again.

Beloved brother, these are now some of our objections against the new articles which you have sent to us, and we request you, again, from the depth of our hearts, do hold fast and unmovable to the old gospel faith and confession on which our church has stood for already so many hundreds of years. For we also want, with the help of God, to hold fast to it immoveably. For we feel convinced and believe firmly, that if the old faith is so torn down, as the new constitution shows, the days of the nonresistant Mennonite Church would be numbered.

In conclusion, the grace of God as a hearty greeting of love to you and to all the dear brethren and sisters who can accept this in love.

From your brothers and humble fellow-ministers

Christian Herr
Jacob Hochstaetter
Christian Bomberger
Heinrich Schenk
Martin Mayer
Benjamin Herr

Translated by Ira D. Landis and H. S. Bender from the very old German manuscript copy in the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, found in the John F. Funk Collection, possibly the original which had been sent to Funk, probably by Henry Nice. A further German copy is in the Schwenkfelder Historical Library at Pennsburg, Pa.

BOOK REVIEW

Conscience and Compromise. By Edward LeRoy Long, Jr. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954. Pp. 166. $3.00.

A Review and Discussion

Mr. Long has fallen short of a very worthy goal, for no fault of his own. His purpose is most laudible; a rehabilitation of the discipline of Christian casuistry which is the application of general ethical principles to specific cases. Such an undertaking is highly needed in our day. One reason that Christians in our day cannot come to agreement on certain obvious matters of ethics is that there is no clarity on the nature of casuistry. On one hand, the so-called neo-orthodox school claims that there can be no principles at all, so of course there can be no study of the consistent application of principles to specific cases. This attempt to deny the possibility of principle is really parallel to the attitude of those who want no theology; and who in the end often have a bad theology because, being unavowed, it is unexamined. Likewise the ethics of neo-orthodoxy, though its denial of principle would consistently mean that the discipline of ethics does not exist, is built directly on certain obvious principles: the necessity of maintaining a tolerable justice in society, the necessity of self-preservation, the necessity for submitting both these principles to the criticism of love, conceived as a benevolent willingness to sacrifice in the interest of the other. These three elements are compounded variously in each case according to the dictates of insight (intuition) and the situation (opportunism). Thus neo-orthodox ethics has its own casuistry.

The other tendency in ethics commits the opposite error; considering every ethical decision as a matter of principle, this school of thought attaches to the specific case the validity of the principle, failing to admit that no one case-application can express complete fidelity to all the principles involved. Holders of this position are often proud of the label "perfectionist" and castigate any other position than their own as compromise. This represents in one way a commendable attitude with regard to the individual's commitment to discipleship, since once a given course of action is chosen as right it is an ethical absolute for the disciple. But at the same time such an analysis is a tragic oversimplification of the involvement in imperfection and the unavoidable complicity in evil which is the fate of even the disciple in this world.

The term "casuistry" has earned its ill repute because of two sorts of abuses, neither of which however can legitimately call into question the real necessity of deductive ethical reasoning from principles to cases. One abuse was that associated with the Jesuit tradition whose concrete concern was to give leeway for a considerable degree of opportunism in the interest of the church. The error here was not in the deduction from ethical general principles, but in the fact that principles such as the necessity of survival or keeping one's job were given equal status with the fundamental Biblical commands. The other abuse, that of the Pharisees, was especially concerned with meritorious ethical perfection. Its error was obviously the idea that personal merit before God can be earned, and is related more to matters of ritual observance than to those of practical morality. But the more basic error, shared by both Jesuitical and Pharisaical casuistry, is the preoccupation with what is

forbidden, that is, with specific wrongs, rather than with the good that is commanded. The latter is the concern of valid evangelical ethics. Mr. Long's analysis begins to be inadequate when he fails to enunciate and apply clearly this distinction. The Jesuits *permitted* too much, while the Pharisees *forbade* too much, but both were alike in that forbidding was the function of their casuistry.

That Long has, in spite of himself, taken a similar view of the matter becomes evident when he approaches questions of application in the latter part of the book. Rather than look for the positive value of an act as obedience, he asks whether it may rightfully be forbidden (the question he asks about dancing, for instance), or whether it can be a source of justification. Often he gives the right answer, for in the realm of the Gospel no act is a source of justification and few acts are forbidden as such. But rather than give the right answers to the wrong questions, it would have been far better to ask the right question which is: How may I best serve (I Cor. 10:23)? This is the only question which really matters for an ethic of discipleship.

Mr. Long takes over from neo-orthodoxy a serious confusion of terms, shown already in the title given his book. As the terms are commonly used, casuistry is not the same as compromise. Casuistry is an effort to remain as true as possible to the ethical principles involved in a particular decision. When the several principles seem to conflict, casuistry demands a degree of adjustment which might be called compromise. But more generally "compromise" signifies being less than "as true as possible" to principle in the interest of effectiveness, survival, or some other less valid aim. The church's involvement in war, for instance, is compromise in the second sense, not in the first, as far as this reviewer can see.

Mr. Long's starting point is right; he demonstrates the impossibility of withdrawal from social responsibility as a way to avoid involvement in the world's imperfection. Compromise in the sense of finding the best one can possibly do in a fallen world is thus unavoidable and right. But then the author goes on as if he had proved that compromise in the sense of doing less than the best, sacrificing one principle otherwise than in the interest of a higher principle, were also demonstrated to be necessary.

This is really another form of the "lesser-evil" argument, which, confusing the impossibility in a fallen world of avoiding evil (in the sense of suffering), concludes that it is wrong to attempt to avoid evil in the sense of sin. On the level of evil as suffering, there is some truth to the thesis that the least (not the lesser) evil of the available possibilities is the right action, provided that the standards of comparison and the estimate of available possibilities are valid. This has nothing to do with the utterly unevangelical doctrine that sin is unavoidable and we should choose the lesser sin. Christ chose lesser evils constantly; when He avoided people who needed healing in order to train His disciples, when He permitted the injustice of Roman occupation to persist, when by His association with sinners He drew upon Himself the unjust reproach of winebibbing and gluttony, when He let Himself be seized and executed unjustly. But He never chose the lesser sin.

The upper pole of the tension within which ethical decision is made is rightly defined as love, revealed in Christ. Long does not, however, let love be defined as Christ and the New Testament define it, by the cross, an *agape* whose response to evil is to keep on loving. Love is, for Long, in spite of the definition with which he begins, a benevolent

sentiment which seeks the common good but without any very precise information as to how that good is to be defined. Thus there is still room for a loving use of violence, for war in the interests of justice, whereas if the cross had been permitted to define love it would have become plain that the morality of force can never be its expression. The tension which exists between redemptive love and a situation which does not let itself be redeemed is replaced by the tension between love as seeking redemption and love as seeking justice, between the ethics of the New Testament and the ethics of the Old Testament.

Nor is the lower pole of the tension adequately defined. It is true that casuistry must adapt ethical absolutes to the existing situation when a perfect solution is not available. An example is the refusal to participate in war; this refusal in itself does not bring about heaven on earth, and it may require suffering, but it is the least evil of the available possibilities. Yet often in Long's argument we find him compromising, not with an unideal existing situation, but with political necessity and the need for responsible action. His prior decision to assume political responsibility, or to value the survival of a society as a good in itself, begs the entire question as to what sort of actions faithfully apply love in society. The question as to whether the love of the cross commands specific political responsibilities, instead of being decided casuistically with relation to a specific situation, is decided by definition, thus giving the sinful situation normative authority and delimiting the realm in which love may exercise its critique. Whereas withdrawal from society is unjustifiable, in the sense of refusal to admit the necessity of dealing with the existing situation because it is impossible, withdrawal from certain areas of society out of fidelity to principles which permit no bargaining is valid casuistry.

Another serious source of error is the failure to be clear as to the ethical agent for any by whom decision is made. One has the impression that acts as such can be judged and their desirability measured with no reference to the person who does the measuring or to the person who will commit the acts. Here again a more Biblical starting point would have clarified the discussion. For the Bible thinks of Christian ethics as being for Christians, and though this statement appears to be empty tautology, it needs to be underlined in post-Constantinian Christendom. Long's effort at a middle ground between idealism and cynicism never presupposes, as valid Christian ethics must, either separation from the world or the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has His place in the realm of forgiveness and of devotion, but not in the scheme of casuistry which Long sketches. This is reasonable enough, since neither separation from the world nor the power of the Spirit may be presupposed if one has not first defined the agent of ethics as a Christian ready to obey.

A second dimension of the relation of the Spirit to ethics is that the agent for ethical decision should be, not the theologian, but the church. Application of ethical principles to particular cases is more effective than individual reasoning for numerous reasons: because of the check which the community imposes upon individual egoism and ignorance, because of the collective experience of the members of the group and of the group's past, and because the group's unity in discipleship strengthens the commitment of each individual. It is in this sense that abstinence from the use of alcohol, conscientious refusal to wear the military uniform, the "full community" of the Hutterian Brethren, or the plain clothes of the Amish Mennonites, have real ethical validity, as long as the

group recognizes that they are matters of application and not of pure principle. Confusion of the application with the principle would however transform it into legalism.

It is regrettable that Long did not further support valid concern, especially welcome in neo-orthodox circles, to find a corrective for the "realism" which has been predominant in recent ethical writing, either by a clear statement of the basic principles which casuistry must apply or by a careful discrimination between the sinful situation, in which the principles are to express themselves, and foregone assumptions about ways of meeting that situation. The latter become, in Long's argument, contradictory principles in their own right. As it is, this volume leaves one in a relativistic search for a less-than-golden mean where obedience is not a real possibility; otherwise, it could have offered a corrective to pride which is badly needed in some "perfectionist" circles.

Basel, Switzerland JOHN HOWARD YODER